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ONLY A WAIF OF THE STREETS.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

"Only a waif of the streets!"
The words fell heavy as lead
From the lips of a lady, lovely and proud,
Who caught her skirts, as she passed in the crowd,
From the wan little thing who but said,
"A penny, please, for the crossing-sweep,
My mother and me from starving to keep!"

Perchance the waif *was* but a 'fraud;'
Who knows?—so many are so;
But, lady, if you had but turned a look
At the poor pale one whom your words had struck
As with a cruel blow,
Your heart must have melted, if not of stone—
Which perhaps it is—at that sight alone.

She stood on the curb in her rags,
Barefooted, and broom in hand,
But the dirty face was fully redeemed
By the sad wide eyes that filled and streamed,
As they followed your form so grand;
And the white pinched lips were quivering too,
And her bosom heaved, but you never knew.

You never knew, or dreamed,
That perhaps a breaking heart
Had received from you, in your thoughtless scorn,
The final blow which had coldly torn
Its last poor string apart;
Never thought of it, night or day,
When you dance or sing, or when you pray.

"Only a waif of the streets!"
Oh! you of power and place,
If you must refuse your petty alms
To poor little quivering childish palms,
Do it with pitying grace;
Not with a word that may stab with its spleen—
Not with a scorn that may scathe unseen.

The Plot Against Hawley;

OR, THE

PRISONER OF DESOLATION.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE BOY MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE BROKEN HOME," "EDDY'S SEARCH," "THE CLUB-FOOT BEAR," "MARK HEBER'S LUCK," ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

AN APPEAL FROM BANTAM.

The person presenting himself at Hawley's hut upon Sentry-box island, [illegible] appeal for admittance, was Fisty Bantam.

The door being instantly opened, he tumbled into the apartment, rather than entered, such was his extreme weakness and exhaustion.

His frame was thin to gauntness, his countenance cadaverous, his eyes sunken, his limbs withered, and his whole aspect that of a man who has passed through a long and dreadful illness.

He was, in fact, so greatly and terribly changed that Hawley did not at first recognize him.

His hands were cut and bleeding, as were his cheeks and temples; his senses upset and bewildered; his manner wild and scared. His teeth chattered violently; his whole frame shivered. He was wet to the skin, and nearly frozen. He caught his breath sharply and pantingly.

It was evident at a glance that he was fresh from some terrible struggle—some imminently deadly peril.

"Oh, I am so cold and faint!" he panted.

"He's Bantam!" cried Dougal, in astonishment.

"Then danger must be near us," said our hero quietly. "See if he's alone."

Dougal went out, followed by the madman, while Will. proceeded to undress the sufferer and place him in bed, covering him with furs.

"We have no fire to-day," he said. "Our fuel is so limited that we are compelled to save it for cooking. But you will soon get warm."

"Yes, yes," chattered Bantam. "It is like heaven here. How warm and cozy! No cold, no wind, no snow! Was not that Dougal who went out?"

"It was. He has gone to see if any of the runaways are with you."

"Not one of them is with me. I have come here alone. I recognized Dougal the day you escaped with the boats. I have known all the while that he was not burned with the *Dower*. You saved him, I suppose?"

"I did. I was on the *Dower* when your two men came off to set it afire."

"And who are you? Have you any objection to telling me?"

"Not the least in the world. My name is Hawley. I belong in New York. I came out here as the first officer of the *Flying Childers*, an Australian clipper which called here for fresh water. I was assaulted by some mysterious madman, or by some disguised ruffian—I am uncertain which—and was carried off into the interior of the island while unconscious. My friends, not seeing the occurrence, supposed that I had slipped and fallen over the cliffs into the sea. They accordingly sailed away without me."

"And so you happened to be here to come to Dougal's rescue? I understand. But who is that other man?"

"He is an unfortunate sailor who was shipwrecked here several years ago. His sufferings have been such that he has lost his mind, and I have not been able to learn full particulars about him."

"There are only three of you here?"

"That's all."

"And yet what a house you have made for yourselves!" said Bantam, as he looked around admiringly. "Oh! if we had only provided ourselves with such quarters as this! What a nice light that is! You talk of cooking, too. I suppose you have enough to eat?"

"A plenty of good, wholesome food. We have devoted a great deal of attention to what we eat—for want of more important duties."

"And you keep as warm as toast."

"That is another point to which especial attention has been given, as was necessary. We have on hand quite a store of furs made into garments and robes."

"I see them all around me." And the eyes of Bantam fairly flamed in their covetous admiration, as they roamed again rapidly around the interior of the boat dwelling. "You are living here like nabobs—like kings!"

"We get along very comfortably indeed, considering everything."

"Can you give me something to eat?"

"Certainly. We had stewed duck to-day, with boiled rice in it—a treat we allow ourselves only once or twice a week. Will you have some?"

"Oh, don't ask me! The question is torture. My mouth is watering. I'm nearly starved. I have not had anything good to eat for weeks past."

"Then I will give you a reasonable allowance of our stew at once."

Bantam nearly held his breath, and his eyes followed every movement of our hero, as he proceeded to serve up the promised dainty.

"Oh, this is delicious!" said Bantam, after swallowing two or three mouthfuls in rapid succession. "I've not had a morsel of anything since yesterday morning."

"Then you must eat more slowly now," enjoined Will., "and you must not ask me for any more. As you can well comprehend, every mouthful of such a stew as that is a treasure, in our present circumstances and surroundings."

"It's better than gold. You saved the rice from the *Dower*, I suppose?"

"We did, or rather we captured it with the boats, after you had saved it from the *Dower*. Our supply is very limited indeed, and we use it sparingly."

"I can well believe it. I've never tasted anything so good—never."

He began to eat more slowly, to make the savory mouthfuls last the longer.

A moment later Dougal returned from his tour of observation.

"Not a soul has come here with him," he reported, "nor can I comprehend how he reached here. There is no boat, no raft, not so much as a plank visible."

"Indeed! This is singular," said Hawley.

Bantam continued to eat, without raising his eyes from the pan in which the stew had been served to him.

"The wind has gone down and the snow has ceased," added Dougal, "and the weather has cleared up all around the board. We can see the shores of Desolation again."

"Indeed! Do you see anything of the runaways?"

"Yes. They have turned out in force at the foot of Cape Cumberland, and are all looking in this direction and showing great excitement."

"And how about the ice between us and them?"

"It has been broken up by the waves, and carried away by the currents. The channel between us and the Cape is nearly as wide as ever."

Bantam had now licked his wooden spoon and his pan, and was ready to take part in the conversation.

"You wonder how I came here," he said. "I came here on a cake of ice."

His hearers all looked incredulous, even the madman.

"It's even so," protested Bantam. "You know very well that we have no boat. I did not intend to come, of course, in the storm and wind that have been raging; I am here through an infernal accident."

"An accident?" repeated Will., still incredulous. "Explain!"

"You must know that we are in a desperate situation," said Bantam. "Nine of my men are dead already, and a dozen others are more or less frozen. I myself have lain at death's door for several weeks with a fever. We didn't prepare, you see, for such an infernal winter as this island of Desolation has given us. The fact was, we expected friends to come to our assistance, and so didn't take the necessary measures of precaution. You can't imagine what we have suffered. The only thing that has afforded us any comfort has been the thought of getting at you and taking our revenge. You have been frank with me, Mr. Hawley, and I will be frank with you. During the past few days, as we have seen the line of ice extending out this way, we have been waiting and looking to see the whole channel frozen over, and you needn't be astonished to hear that we have been tickled about to death at the prospect of coming here to clean you out."

"I can well comprehend your feelings—after your treatment of Dougal," said Hawley.

"True," assented Bantam, flashing upon Dougal a look in which a sullen hate and malice was perceptible. "But to go on with my story. At noon to-day the ice shore had advanced so far in this direction that I felt sure of being able to worry you with our muskets. The channel was more than three-fourths covered, and not a quarter of a mile of space lay between us and your boat dwelling. But we found that we couldn't reach you. This place is well around toward the seaward side of the island, and is protected by a foot hill, so that we were compelled to conclude that it would be perfectly useless to open fire upon you. I hated to give up the notion, however, and so I paced along the edge of the ice shore, as far out as possible, trying to get some idea or make some discovery, and paying no attention to the rising wind, or to the warning cries of my men, who had retreated toward the Cape one after another. I was still prowling along the outer edge of the ice, and looking in this direction and wishing that I had a boat, and cursing you roundly, and vowing all sorts of vengeance, when suddenly, and without the least warning, a field of ice about the size of a clipper's main deck broke off from the rest, and went bowling away seaward, with me upon it!"

"Horrible!" Will. could not help ejaculating.

"I gave myself up for a dead man, of course," continued Bantam. "I had just time to see that the whole ice-field behind me was being broken up into a thousand fragments by the same high sea that had sent me adrift, and then I found myself pitching and plunging like Abraham's ram in the thicket. The cake of ice was all awash, and I had all I could do to keep myself upon it, as the wind was blowing a gale—that sharp, sudden squall which Dougal says is now over. I was so scared that you could have put me into a pint cup. Slip! scramble! swash! I'm tempted to yell at the thought of it. The next thing I knew the cake of ice had split in two, leaving me on the little end. It had struck a rock. That rock is off this island. As thick as was the weather at the moment, I could see something thicker looming up close ahead of me—the high bluffs of this island. I hung for dear life to my bit of ice, as it came tumbling on toward the beach, and the leap I made when the cake of ice struck the land would astonish you. I rolled over and over in the snow, and floundered a moment in the water; but I soon scrambled up the bank, and took my way up your path in this direction, hardly knowing whether I was living or dead."

Will. and Dougal exchanged glances of mutual assurance. They knew that Bantam had told them the truth in the matter. As reckless and daring as he was, he would not have dared trust himself purposely to a cake of ice for the terrible voyage he had actually accomplished.

"You feel all right now, I suppose?" said Will.

"Yes. Your stew has made a new man of me. The awful coldness and faintness I felt a few minutes ago is all gone."

"Then, as the storm is over, we will slip our boat into the water, and take you back to your friends."

The promptness with which this proposition was made, no less than its nature, seemed to displease Bantam. An involuntary frown mantled his features.

Hawley continued:

"Of course you do not feel at home here, and would not wish to stay with us. You are our deadly enemy, and at the moment of your accident was trying to compass the ways and means of killing us. I have treated you well because you were thrown helpless upon my compassion. I have told you something about myself because I chose to answer a civil question, and because it is utterly out of your power to harm us, and always will be. But that you will stay with us a minute longer than is absolutely necessary is utterly impossible."

"One moment, if you please," said Bantam. "Now that I am here, I should be glad to make a few observations. Nine of my men are already dead, and others are sick and dying. Were we compelled to pass the entire winter here, I do not believe a man of us would be alive next October."

"Well, that is your look-out," said Will. sternly. "You must lie in the bed you have made."

"One word more. If you were compelled to remain here all winter, or if you should attempt to remain here, you will all perish."

"I think to the contrary. I expect to be compelled to remain here all winter, and I expect, further, that we shall live comfortably. We have assured ourselves all the essentials of existence, whatever may happen—food, drink and warm clothing."

"But a better course is open to us both," Bantam hastened to say, his manner showing that he was chagrined at Hawley's calm assurance. "Dougal has doubtless told you who I am, and you have learned further particulars from that little speech I made to my men in the secret grotto, the morning after our arrival here. But you have much to learn concerning me. The first new truth I now proceed to impart to you is, that I have good friends and allies whom I expect here from one minute to another."

"We presumed as much," returned Will. quietly. "Who are these allies?"

"One is the Malay Gunner, and the other is the worst desperado who has been in Australia for ten years past—present company always excepted. I refer to Kangaroo Jimmy."

"Indeed! You have friends in high places, it seems—Kangaroo Jimmy and the Malay Gunner!"

"Yes. Kangaroo Jimmy has been a particular friend of mine for many years. We used to be chained together. And as to the Malay Gunner, Jimmy and I got acquainted with him while he was recruiting men for his little navy."

"And you expect these two worthies here at the island of Desolation?"

"They should have been here within a week after I arrived here myself," declared Bantam, with the energy of a bitter disappointment. "It was all arranged beforehand. Kangaroo Jimmy was to head an uprising in Van Diemen's Land, and sail hither with his followers, and the Malay Gunner was to slip down here from his retreat. Both were due here, according to our arrangement, before I arrived here myself, as our voyage in the *Dower*—as Dougal may have told you—was full of delays, and came very near being a complete disaster!"

"And so you have been waiting vainly all these months for the Malay Gunner and Kangaroo Jimmy?" said Hawley. "We have all along supposed that you had an alliance of this nature: the way in which you destroyed the *Dower* was a sufficient evidence of the fact. Dougal even overheard some whispers of the matter during his captivity in your hands."

"And now to come to what I was about to say to you," said Bantam. "I propose to you a treaty of peace. Here are two boats, one for you and one for us. Let's all sail from Desolation to-morrow. A few hundred miles will bring us to Amsterdam Island, and from there we can pass on to other islands at will. In two weeks we can exchange these winter snows for the flowers of the tropics. If you are not a thorough navigator, Mr. Hawley, Captain Dougal is, and we have splendid instruments—those taken from the *Dower*, in fact—so that you will not have the least difficulty in reaching Amsterdam Island, or any other to which you may choose to proceed—"

"Enough of this," interrupted Hawley. "We shall not make any arrangement of the kind you propose. We will not have anything whatever to do with you. Captain Dougal would die, I am sure, before he would assist you in any way, after your late attempt to burn him alive, and you may be certain that *I* would not associate with you in the manner proposed for all the money there is on the earth. If you could get a boat, I think you and Dicksey Dock and a few others would dig up Mr. Aymar's buried million and run away with it, leaving the rest of your comrades to their fate—"

Bantam started violently, and an accusing blush covered his pale features.

"Ah! I remember!" he cried. "You heard what I said in the grotto about the buried treasure? Well, I—I have since dug for the money, and failed to find any trace of it. Either it was never buried in the spot indicated, or it was dug up years ago by some other possessor of the secret. In any case your accusation falls to the ground. My only object—"

"There is no necessity of pursuing the matter," interrupted Hawley. "You will not get any boat here—no assistance whatever, beyond a warm suit of sealskin, with which I will now furnish you, upon condition of your stowing yourself away in it within five minutes, and upon the further condition of your leaving Sentry-box island in the manner I shall direct within five minutes thereafter."

He produced the suit mentioned.

"And this is your last word to me?"

"This is every word I have to say to you."

"Then I may as well be off," said Bantam, with sullen wrath, as he slipped from the bed and began to dress himself in the new suit offered him. "But I give you fair warning, that if the Malay Gunner or Kangaroo Jimmy *should* arrive here—as they may any day—it'll be a sorry day for you!"

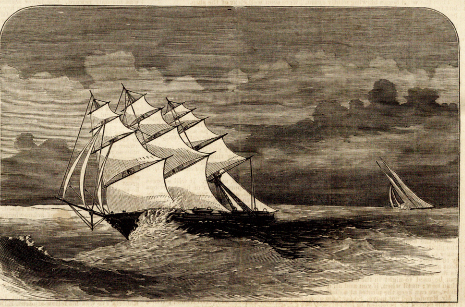
"Oh, you can spare all your threats," said Will., with exasperating coolness. "We know very well what you would do to us, if you had the power. But neither the Malay Gunner nor Kangaroo Jimmy will come here this winter; and if they should, we shall know the fact as soon as you do. Upon the whole, as you see, we have the advantage, and we mean to keep it. The minute you are dressed, we will slip our boat into the water and take you back to Cape Cumberland."

And within twenty minutes thereafter this measure had been carried out, and Will. and his friends had returned in safety to their island.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DOUBLY DOOMED.

ENTERED ACCORDING TO ACT OF CONGRESS, IN THE YEAR 1872, BY ROBERT BONNER, IN THE OFFICE OF THE LIBRARIAN OF CONGRESS, AT WASHINGTON.



THE SHIP PETREL CHASED BY A PIRATE.

It was perfectly clear, at the moment we left the *Petrel*, the Indiaman upon which Mr. Thomas Aymar, Mrs. Hawley's uncle, had embarked for New York, that the ship must be overtaken sooner or later by the pirate in her wake.

This pirate was believed to be the Malay Gunner, who had been for several years preceding the most dreaded scourge of the East Indies.

The nearness of this pursuer, his supposed identity, the certainty that the distance between the ship and the schooner was constantly lessening—all these exciting facts had duly circulated throughout the *Petrel*, arousing all the passengers, and producing that buzz of questioning and confusion which only a general commotion can create.

The main deck of the Indiaman was now thronged with passengers, a few of whom met the crisis calmly, uttering no alarms, and taking care not to get in the way of the officers and crew, but the majority were more or less frightened, as usually happens in all situations of the kind, and not a few of them were in a state of mind bordering upon panic.

The commander himself, as his remarks have attested, had taken in all the gravity of the peril—not as one who weakly yields to apprehension, but as one who wisely estimates his enemy at his full value, as the first condition toward combating him successfully.

"You have looked to our arms, I suppose, Mr. Sterling?" asked Capt. Graham of his first officer, after an interval of thoughtful silence.

"Yes, sir. Everything is in readiness."

"Continue ready. Our action will depend upon circumstances, of course, but we will neither die nor surrender until we have fought a good battle."

Mr. Aymar paced to and fro upon the deck with a thoughtfulness that was almost solemn. In view of his former encounter with pirates, ten years before, his present situation struck him as the strangest of fatalities, as he had asserted.

"I cannot help thinking of the strangeness of this new encounter with the pirates," he said to Capt. Graham, after taking several turns to and fro with him in silence. "Can it be that the curse of Heaven is upon me?"

"A singular question, truly!" rejoined Graham. "Why do you ask it?"

"I will tell you. For ten years I toiled like a slave in India to earn my first million. During those ten years I hardly took time to write to my only brother. My million earned, I sailed for America. A pirate chased us, and I was compelled to escape in a boat, leaving my million to become a pirate's booty. But I was full of energy, and I resolved, on reaching Calcutta, to accumulate another million, and another period of ten years has accordingly been employed in that task. This second million secured, I have started a second time for America—only to be a second time chased by a pirate!"

"Well, sir, it does not follow that the curse of Heaven is upon you," said Graham. "It is a strange fatality, as you have remarked, that your situation of to-day should be so much like that of ten years ago; but, after all, history is constantly repeating itself, and you would be wicked to suppose that you have made an enemy of Heaven by this accumulation of riches. The accumulation of wealth by honest industry is one of the noblest duties and virtues of manhood."

"I can at least say that I have sought for riches unselfishly," said Mr. Aymar. "My constant endeavor has always been to use my means for the good of those around me. And lately, since I have learned that I have a niece living—the only child of my only brother—my highest happiness has been to consider what benefits I will confer upon her and her husband, and through them upon others."

"Then you may safely hope that your misgivings are unfounded, and that the pirates behind us will be cheated of their expected booty."

"Do you know what the pirates did with the *Hornet*, the ship in which I sailed for America ten years ago?" asked Mr. Aymar abruptly.

The commander shook his head.

"She was dispatched to the retreat of the pirates upon an island in the Indian Ocean well up toward Java. She was beached in a beautiful bay, entirely dismantled, and converted into a store-house and dwelling. She was found in that situation five years afterward, when the government cruisers at length presented themselves in force at this secret retreat, and expelled the pirates from it. If these pirates now astern of us should capture the *Petrel*, they may make a similar disposition of her."

"It looks probable enough."

"Were I sure, or even reasonably hopeful, of their taking this course," said Mr. Aymar, "I would stick to the ship to the last, even if you and all the rest leave her. My money is safely hidden in a secret place, as you know, and it will not be difficult for me to hide myself so completely that the pirates will stand little chance of discovering me. I shall feel the loss of this second fortune even more than I did the loss of the other one—"

"But a portion of your funds are in bills of exchange, this time, Mr. Aymar?"

"Yes, sir. I have made that much concession to the new order of things, but I think as well of bullion as ever. I have even forwarded two hundred thousand dollars to New York, including a hundred thousand which I have placed at the disposal of my niece, Mrs. Hawley. I have written to her that I am coming. I have told her of my new fortune; I am well along in years now, and I could

Alice Van P

never again tie myself down to business as heretofore. If the worst comes, therefore, I shall stick to the ship and to my money, if there seems to be even one chance in ten of my rescuing my money and life from these blood-hounds. I'm not a rash fool, I hope, to undertake an impossibility, and throw away the remaining years of my life for nothing, but I would do and dare anything within the limits of the possible, to rescue my life and money from the wretches behind us."

His face glowed with a lofty heroism, and his eyes gleamed with an awful sternness.

"Let us hope that the worst will not come," suggested Graham. "Some stroke of good fortune may yet save us."

A bell suddenly rang out a cheerful peal—the "rising bell"—the hour being half-past seven.

Mr. Aymar smiled involuntarily.

"Nothing ever disturbs those stewards," he said.

"Nothing," assented Graham. "They would have breakfast upon the table punctually at eight o'clock, if there were as many pirate ships around us as there are points of the compass."

Half an hour thereafter, or at eight o'clock, the same bell accordingly rang again, announcing that breakfast was ready, and Capt. Graham, accompanied by Mr. Aymar, proceeded to the cabin as quietly and calmly as ever. Seeing this, nearly all the passengers turned their steps in the same direction, and were soon occupying their accustomed places at the tables.

The breakfast was as good and elaborate as usual, but on the part of many of the guests the usual appetite was wanting.

His repast finished, Mr. Aymar took his way to the quarter-deck, where he was soon joined by the commander, who had lighted his usual morning cigar.

"How many British ships of war are there in East Indian waters to-day, Captain Graham?" inquired Mr. Aymar.

"I should say some thirty or forty, sir."

"And many of these are steamships?"

"Yes, sir. And it is probable that the Americans have twelve or fifteen ships in their East Indies squadron."

"Then how does it happen that this Malay Gunner is still running at large?"

"The question is natural enough," returned Capt. Graham, "but it is not difficult to answer it. There are few steamers in the British navy, or any other, that can sail with the schooner behind us, and probably not one in all the navies of the world that can gain a knot an hour upon her. Suppose, therefore, that the pirate is seen early in the morning by a ship of war, or by a fleet of them. All he has to do is to run away before them all day, and it is simply impossible, in the ordinary course of things, for the pursuers to overhaul him before night. And after night has once set in, why, he can slip off in any direction he pleases, and the government cruisers see no more of him."

"According to this, it is about as difficult to run down a fleet-footed pirate as it would be to find a needle in a haystack?"

"That's the exact truth in the matter. But there are also several minor facts worth considering. For instance, the Malay Gunner is no Malay at all, but a full-blooded Englishman—in fact, a disgraced officer of the British navy."

"How dweadful!" commented a little fellow from London, who happened to overhear the commander's statement. "A Bwitisher! The deuce take him and all the piwates! I thought the Bwitish men-of-waw had killed all the piwates! This is deuced disagweeable! I must see the steward and get a glass of bwandy."

"I share the little fellow's sentiments, with the exception of the 'bwandy,'" said Mr. Aymar, as the young Londoner vanished. "We certainly had a report toward the close of the year that the Malay Gunner had been tracked to his retreat, and he was even believed to have been killed."

"The report to which you refer was not entirely true, but it was seriously founded. The Malay Gunner did indeed receive a terrible blow, but it seems that he was not entirely demolished—only temporarily crippled."

The morning advanced. Hour after hour passed away, with little change in the situation of the two vessels, save that the pirate continued to come nearer and nearer. A stern chase is proverbially a long chase, and the schooner did not ride the heavy seas so well as did the ship, owing to the superior size of the latter. The forenoon was thus at length all consumed, and such of the passengers as were not too alarmed and excited proceeded to lunch, which was served as usual.

The breeze had continued stiff all the morning, but a heavy rain set in soon after noon, and both the wind and the sea were soon beaten down to a moderate force. The sails which had been taken in upon the *Petrel* were again shaken out, and again the Indiaman glided on her way like some wild bird of the tempest.

The passengers had nearly all retired under cover, on account of the rain, and the crew were as busy as bees, handling the ship with every care and energy, under the skillful and experienced eyes of their officers, when suddenly, without the least warning, the mild, steady wind changed to a fierce squall from the south-east, taking the *Petrel* aback.

There came an awful cry from a score of throats, and then came a still more appalling silence, as the noble ship went over upon her starboard beams, while her topmasts, broken short off, came thundering down, with all their rigging, in one terrific avalanche!

The crew caught, of course, every man, at the nearest stay, brace, or other support that offered.

The blow had fallen as blows of this kind usually do—instantaneously, terribly.

There succeeded an instant of stupor—of that consternation which renders action impossible—and then Capt. Graham, perched upon the weather—so lately lee—mizzen chains, ax in hand, was seen chopping the port mizzen shrouds.

They snapped like pipe stems, and a few rapid blows did like service for the mast.

At the same instant, Mr. Sterling was doing similar work forward, first cutting away the weather fore shrouds and then the mast itself.

And then, relieved—the squall lulling almost as quickly as it had come—the ship righted.

What havoc had been wrought! And how quickly!

"Clear away that hamper!" commanded Capt. Graham, indicating the shrouds and stays on the starboard side, by which the fallen masts were still clinging to the hull. "Lively!"

This sad work was soon done, and the ship—a mere wreck—swept clear of the fallen rigging.

She had been fearfully dismantled, Her topmasts were all gone, with all their rigging. Of her fore and mizzen masts there remained only the unsightly splintered stumps. Her mainmast was still intact, supporting its shrouds—which were greatly damaged—and carrying its yard. Her bulwarks, except amidships, showed numerous gaps, where the topmasts had fallen. Her wheel was still intact. Her boats had all remained fast, and, without exception, were not at all damaged.

The dismay with which the officers and crew gazed upon this scene can be but faintly imagined.

"There is one question settled," exclaimed Capt. Graham bitterly. "The pirate is sure to overhaul us!"

"Yes, and he knows it," rejoined Mr. Sterling, who was again on the look-out. "He has seen what has happened to us, and is taking in sail."

He watched the schooner in silence until she showed nothing save a close-reefed fore-sail, and then he added:

"In forty minutes the pirate will be here. He will find us perfectly helpless—rolling like a log upon the waters."

"Well, he can't board us in this wind, and he don't wish to sink us; so he won't be able to finish with us at present," rejoined the commander.

"True, sir. And in the mean time we may be able to do something. To begin with, can't we get the wreck before the wind? The wheel and rudder are still sound, and, once before the wind, the ship would have way enough to steer easily."

It was no easy task to carry out the mate's proposition, but it was finally accomplished. The sea was rough and chopping, the wind again heavy, but the new course gave great relief to the labors and movements of the doomed vessel.

"There, she goes easier, as I thought she would," exclaimed Mr. Sterling. "Besides, we are still going away from the pirate, and so putting off the moment of his unwelcome visit. We are also gaining time to consider what we will do."

Mr. Aymar, who had appeared again and exchanged a few words with Capt. Graham, now took his way back to the cabin, and the commander gave all his attention to the ship.

He saw that she lurched strangely.

"Ah, a leak!" he shouted. "To the pumps!"

The men hurriedly obeyed.

"Keep both of them going," added the commander, when they had shown that the ship was leaking badly. "We must never say die!"

The dull clank of the pumps, worked with all the energies of terror and despair, rang out hollowly upon the scene, deepening its horrors.

Suddenly there came a strange calm.

The wreck, feeling no pressure of wind, began to roll fearfully.

Then the wind began blowing wildly again, but from its former direction, returning to its permanent quarter.

"This is awkward enough," cried Mr. Sterling, "but we will change too."

By a resolute effort he used the headway the hull had acquired with such effect as to keep her bow to the windward until he had set his mainsail, greatly to his satisfaction.

"The chief benefit of this course," he muttered, "is that we shall meet the pirate so much the later—and a meeting is now inevitable."

As he spoke, he noticed that the clanking of the pumps had suddenly ceased.

He was about to inquire what this interruption meant, and why the men were moving away from the pumps, when the second mate of the *Petrel*, a veteran of the ocean, rough and illiterate, but a good navigator, presented himself before the commander, with a look of dogged resolution upon his features.

"Captain Graham," said he, "the men have been talking among themselves. They say that there is no use of pumping—that the ship is booked for the bottom—that the pirates are near, and that it is time for us to be going in the boats."

"In the boats?" echoed the commander. "What! on the heels of this squall?"

"It's the least of our dangers. The boats will live even in this sea, and if our former wind continues, we can make the island of Bourbon in the course of a week."

The commander was astounded.

"Go back to your men, Mr. Rundel," commanded he sternly, "and let me hear no more of this nonsense. When I want the men to take to the boats, I will tell them. Perhaps the pirates would let a boat pass, they being eager to plunder the ship, but it is more likely that they would send a few shots into your boat and make an end, with all in it. Be that as it may, the boats are the last resort, and can be used to-night in the darkness better than now; until when, if you and all do your duty, we can keep the pirates at a distance."

Mr. Rundel did not move. So far from obeying his orders, he persisted in his purpose, as the representative of the crew.

"One word more, Mr. Rundel," added Capt. Graham. "Remember that I am the commander of this ship, and do me the justice to believe that I am mindful of your interests, and of the interests of every man here—more, that I am acting for your and their best good. Tell the men this, Mr. Rundel, and resume your duty at once."

Mr. Rundel glanced at the men, who had moved in a body toward the two best boats, and had begun to undo their fastenings. His dogged resolution grew to a downright mutiny.

"There's no use of talking, Captain Graham," said he hoarsely. "The men will stay here no longer. They're not going to stay here, to be sunk with the ship, or to be walked off a plank, one after another. They prefer their chances elsewhere, so long as there *is* a chance, and a reasonable one, of reaching Bourbon in safety. With or without your permission, Captain Graham, the men are going in the boats, and I shall go with them."

What the commander would have answered to this mutinous language it is impossible to say, for the interview was rudely and terribly interrupted.

A ball from the bow chaser of the schooner, fired sheerly for intimidation, came tearing into the mainmast at this moment, and threw off several large splinters, one of which struck Captain Graham upon the head, and stretched him senseless and bleeding upon the deck.

"Good heavens!" cried Mr. Sterling, springing to the side of his commander. "The captain is killed!"

Without a word, Mr. Rundel slunk away, joining the mutinous crew, and was soon busily engaged with them in provisioning and launching the boats.

"I must take him to the cabin," muttered Mr. Sterling, after a moment of agonized stupor. "Alas! what a misfortune!"

Oblivious of all around him—the mutinous crew, the approaching pirates—he raised the helpless form in his arms and entered the cabin.

In a few words he explained to Mr. Aymar what had happened, placed the insensible form of Capt. Graham in his berth, and entered upon a resolute attempt to recall him to his senses.

"It cannot be that he is mortally wounded," declared the mate, after a closer examination of the injury. "His skull is not broken. There is little blood. It must be that he is only stunned. Let us hasten to do what we can for him."

Mr. Aymar gave every possible assistance. Strong restoratives were administered and applied, and all that the intelligent art of Mr. Aymar or the affection of the mate could suggest for them to do was done promptly.

"He lives! he lives!" at length cried Sterling joyfully. "He is safe!"

Mr. Aymar echoed his joyous exclamations, and the mate rushed to the deck.

Listening, while continuing his ministrations, Mr. Aymar heard his voice in angry remonstrances, mingled with confused shouts and cries, and then he heard sounds of a scuffle, a brief conflict in the direction of the long-boat. A moment thereafter Mr. Sterling came back to him in a state of wild agitation, and with a paleness that looked as strange as terrible upon his sea-bronzed features. He saw that he was bruised and bleeding.

"I could not stop them," he said. "They would not hear to reason."

"Who? The men?"

"Yes. They've all gone, and Rundel is with them."

"Gone!" cried Mr. Aymar. "Where? How?"

"In the boats. They have deserted us, and some of the passengers have gone with them. They mean to make the island of Bourbon."

The breathing of the sufferer, his motions, the very color of his face, now attested that he would soon recover his senses.

A few moments later, Capt. Graham opened his eyes feebly—saw the faces bending over him—realized where he was—and a faint smile expressed the joy and thankfulness he felt at finding himself among the living.

"The pirates?" he then murmured.

"They are coming up rapidly, no doubt," answered Sterling. "I will go and see."

He hurried again to the deck, but almost instantly returned.

"The schooner is within three miles of us," he reported.

"And Rundel? Our men?"

Sterling explained what had become of them.

The commander partially arose, at this dreadful intelligence, but his strength was not equal to the effort, and he sank back in his berth, ghastly white, and for the moment perfectly helpless.

"Rundel took the two best boats?" he asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Where are they now?"

"A good mile away, under sail, in the direction of Bourbon."

"The pirate makes no movement toward overhauling them?"

"No, sir."

"The wind and sea are down?"

"Yes, sir. The heavy rain—"

"Then we may as well go. We may escape in the darkness, as the pirates will probably be here until dark. Get out the two next boats, with water and provisions. Lively!"

Sterling vanished on the instant.

"You will leave your smallest boat behind you, then?" asked Mr. Aymar.

"Of course. It's rather small, and we shall not need it."

Mr. Aymar's stern face grew sterner, and his eyes gleamed strangely as he turned to his own state-room.

In a few minutes thereafter, Sterling appeared in the cabin, and announced that everything was ready for departure. Capt. Graham was unable to move without help, but the mate lent him such a firm, steady hand that he was soon transferred to one of the boats, which then pushed off together, and were soon well clear of the ship.

"She's settling rapidly," thought Capt. Graham, looking back, "and the pirates are heaving to near her. She's doubly doomed."

Then he thought of Mr. Aymar, and looked around to speak to him—looked around hurriedly—looked around upon every face and figure in the two boats, only to discover that Mr. Aymar was in neither of them.

"My God!" he murmured. "Mr. Aymar has stuck to the ship—as he was tempted to do! And it's too late to save him!"

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

BUSINESS OF A BOUQUET.

BY FRANCES HENSHAW BADEN.

"See, mother! I've finished my bouquet. Isn't it beautiful? More so, I think, than those made by the florist which he asked two dollars for, and this has cost me but seventy-five cents."

"Yes, yes, it is very pretty. But, dear me, child, I cannot help thinking how illy we can spare so much for such a very useless thing. Almost as much as you can make in a day it has cost."

"Don't say *useless*, mother. It will express to Edward our appreciation of his exertions and their result, and our regards. How he has struggled to obtain a profession! I only wish I could cover the platform with bouquets, baskets and wreaths to-night, when he receives his diploma."

"Well, well; if it will do any good, I shall not mind the expense. But, child, he will know it is from you, and men don't care for such things coming from home folks. Now, if it was from any other young lady, I expect he'd be mightily pleased."

"Oh, mother, I don't think so. Edward will think as much of it, coming from his sister-in-law, as from any other girl. And it will please Kate, too. If *we* do not think enough of him to send him bouquets, who else could? Rest easy, mother, dear; I feel quite sure my bouquet will do much good," answered Annie, putting her bouquet in a glass of water.

She left the room to make her simple toilet for the evening.

Mrs. Grey had been widowed when her two little girls were in their infancy. It had been a hard struggle for the mother to raise her children. Constant toil, privation and anxiety had worn heavily on her naturally delicate constitution, until she had become a confirmed invalid. But there was no longer a necessity for her toiling. Katy, the elder daughter, was married; and Annie, a loving, devoted girl, could now return the mother's long and loving care. By her needle she obtained a support for herself and mother.

Katy's husband held a position under the government, receiving a small compensation, only sufficient for the necessities of the present, and of very uncertain continuance. He was ambitious of doing better than this for himself, as well as his family. So he employed every spare hour in studying medicine, and it was the night that he was to receive his diploma that my little story begins.

The exercises of the evening were concluded. Edward Roberts came down the aisle to where his wife and Annie were seated, bearing his flowers—an elegant basket, tastefully arranged, and a beautiful bouquet. But it needed only a quick glance for Annie to see it was not *her* bouquet. Although the flowers were fragrant and rare, they were not so carefully selected or well chosen. Hers expressed not alone her affection and appreciation, but *his* energy, perseverance and success.

"Why, where is my bouquet? I do not see it," asked Annie, a look of disappointment on her usually bright face.

"Yours? I do not know. Did you send me one?" returned her brother-in-law.

"Indeed I did. And such a beauty too! It is too bad! I suppose it is the result of the stupidity of the young man in whose hands I placed it. I told him plain enough it was for you, and your name, with mine, was on the card," answered Annie, really very much provoked.

"Well, do not fret, little sister; I am just as much obliged; and perchance some poor fellow not so fortunate as I may have received it," answered Edward Roberts.

"Don't, for pity's sake, let mother know of the mistake, or whatever it is, that has robbed you of your bouquet. She will fret dreadfully about it," said Annie.

All that night, until she was lost in sleep, did she constantly repeat:

"I wonder who has got it?"

She had failed to observe on the list of graduates the name of *Edgar Roberts*, from Ohio, or she might have had an idea into whose hands her bouquet had fallen. Her brother Edward, immediately on hearing Annie's exclamation, thought how the mistake had occurred, and was really glad that it was as it was; for the young man whose name was so nearly like his own was a stranger in the city, and Edward had noticed his receiving *one* bouquet only, which of course was the missing one, and Annie's.

Edgar Roberts sat in his room that night, after his return from the distribution of diplomas, holding in his hand Annie's bouquet, and on the table beside him was a floral dictionary. An expression of gratification was on his pleasant face, and, as again and again his eyes turned from the flowers to seek their interpreter, his lips were wreathed with smiles, and he murmured low:

"Annie Grey! Sweet Annie Grey! I never dreamed of any one in this place knowing or caring enough for me to send such a tribute. How carefully these flowers are chosen! What a charming, appreciative little girl she is! Pretty, I know, of course. I wonder how she came to send me this? How shall I find her? Find her I must, and know her."

And Edgar Roberts fell asleep to dream of Annie Grey, and awake in the morning whispering the last words of the night before:

"Sweet Annie Grey!"

During the day he found it quite impossible to fix his mind on his work; mind and heart were both occupied with thoughts of Annie Grey. And so it continued to be until Edgar Roberts was really in love with a girl he knew not, nor had ever seen. To find her was his fixed determination. But how delicately he must go about it. He could not make inquiry among his gentlemen acquaintance without speculations arising, and a name sacred to him then, passed from one to another, lightly spoken perhaps. Then he bethought himself of the City Directory; he would consult that. And so doing, he found Greys innumerable—some in elegant, spacious dwellings, some in the business thoroughfares of the place. The young ladies of the first mentioned, he thought, living in fashionable life, surrounded by many admirers, would scarcely think of bestowing any token of regard or appreciation on a poor unknown student. The next would have but little time to devote to such things; and time and thought were both spent in the arrangement of his bouquet. Among the long list of Greys he found one that attracted him more than all the others—a widow, living in a quiet part of the city, quite near his daily route. So he sought and found the place and exact number. Fortune favored him. Standing at the door of a neat little frame cottage, he beheld a young girl talking with two little children. She was not the blue-eyed, golden-haired girl of his dreams, but a sweet, earnest, dove-eyed darling. And what care he whether her eyes were blue or brown, if her name were only Annie? Oh, how could he find out that?

She was bidding the little ones "good-bye." They were off from her, on the sidewalk, when the elder child—a bright, laughing boy of five—sang out, kissing his little dimpled hand:

"Good-bye, Annie, darling!"

Edgar Roberts felt as if he would like to clasp the little fellow to the heart he had relieved of all anxiety. No longer a doubt was in his mind. He had found his Annie Grey.

From that afternoon, twice every day he passed the cottage of the widow Grey, frequently seeing sweet Annie. This, however, was his only reward. She never seemed at all conscious of his presence. Often her eyes would glance carelessly toward him. Oftener they were never raised from her work. Sewing by the window, she always was.

What next? How to proceed, on his fixed determination of winning her, if possible?

Another bright thought. He felt pretty sure she attended church somewhere; perhaps had a class in the Sabbath school. So the next Sunday morning, at an early hour, he was commanding a view of Annie's home. When the school bells commenced to ring, he grew very anxious. A few moments, and the door opened and the object of his thoughts stepped forth. How beautiful she looked in her pretty white suit! Now Edgar felt his cause was in the ascendency. Some distance behind, and on the other side of the street, he followed, ever keeping her in view until he saw her enter a not far distant church. Every Sunday after found him an attentive listener to the Rev. Mr. Ashton, who soon became aware of the presence of the young gentleman so regularly, and apparently so much interested in the services. So the good man sought an opportunity to speak to Edgar, and urge his accepting a charge in the Sabbath school. We can imagine Edgar needed no great urging on that subject; so, frequently, he stood near his Annie. In the library, while selecting books for their pupils, once or twice they had met, and he had handed to her the volume for which her hand was raised. Of course a smile and bow of acknowledgment and thanks rewarded him.

Edgar was growing happier, and more confident of final success every week, when an event came which promised a speedy removal of all difficulty in his path. The school was going to have a picnic. Then and there he would certainly have an introduction to Annie, and after spending a whole day with her, he would accompany her home and win the privilege of calling often.

The day of the picnic dawned brightly, and the happy party gathered on the deck of the steamer. The first person who met Edgar Roberts' eye was his fellow-student, Edward Roberts. Standing beside him were two ladies and some children. When Edgar hastened up to speak to his friend, the ladies turned, and Edward presented:

"My wife; my sister, Miss Grey."

Edgar Roberts could scarcely suppress an exclamation of joy and surprise. His looks fully expressed how delighted he was.

Three months had he been striving for this, which, if he had only known it, could have been obtained so easily through his friend and her brother. But what was so difficult to win was the more highly prized. What a happy day it was!

Annie was all he had believed her—charming in every way. Edgar made a confidant of his friend; told him what Edward well knew before, but was wise enough not to explain the mistake—of his hopes and fears; and won from the prudent brother the promise to help him all he could.

Accompanying Annie home that evening, and gaining her permission for him to call again, Edgar lost no time in doing so, and often repeated the call.

Perhaps Annie thought him very fast in his wooing, and precipitate in declaring his love, when, after only a fortnight visiting her, he said:

"Annie, do you like me well enough, and trust in me sufficiently, to allow me to ask your mother to call me her son?"

Either so happy or so surprised was Annie, that she could not speak just then. But roses crowded over her fair face, and she did not try to withdraw the hand he had clasped.

"Say, Annie, love," he whispered. She raised her eyes to his with such a strange, surprised look in them, that he laughed and said:

"You think I am very hasty, Annie. You don't know how long I've loved you, and have waited for this hour."

"Long!—two weeks," she said.

"Why, Annie, darling, it is over three months since I've been able to think of anything save Annie Grey—ever since the night I received my diploma, and your sweet, encouraging bouquet. Since that night I've known and loved you. And how I've worked for this hour!"

And then he told her how it was. And when he had finished, she looked at him, her eyes dancing merrily, and though she tried hard to keep the little rose-bud of a mouth demurely shut, it was no use—it would open and let escape a rippling laugh, as she said:

"And this is the work my bouquet went about, is it? This is the good it has done me—" She hesitated; the roses deepened their color as she continued: "And you—"

"Yes, Annie, it has done much good to me, and I hope to you too."

"But, Edgar"—it was the first time she had called him thus, and how happy it made him—"I must tell you the truth—I never sent you a bouquet!"

"No! Oh, do not say so. Can there be another such Annie Grey?"

"No; I am the one who sent the bouquet; but, Edgar, you received it through a mistake. It was intended for my brother-in-law, Edward!"

"Stop, Annie, a moment. Are you sorry that mistake was made? Do you regret it?" said Edgar, his voice filled with emotion.

"No, indeed. I am very glad you received it instead," Annie ingenuously replied; adding quickly: "But, please, do not tell Edward I said so."

"No, no; I will not tell him that you care a little more for *Edgar* than *Edward*. Is that it? May I think so, Annie?"

She nodded her head, and he caught her to his heart, whispering:

"Mine at last. My Annie, darling! What a blessed mistake it was! May I go to your mother, Annie?"

"Yes; and I'll go with you, Edgar, and hear if she will admit those flowers did any good. She thought it a useless expenditure."

The widow Grey had become very much attached to the kind, attentive young man; and when he came with Annie, and asked her blessing on their love, she gave it willingly; and after hearing all about the way it happened, she said:

"Never did flowers such a good work before. They carried Edgar to church, made a Christian of him, and won for Annie a good, devoted husband, and for me an affectionate son."

—Nothing is more common than to try to reconcile our conscience to our evil thoughts by our good actions.

WIT AND HUMOR.

"WILLIE," said a doting parent at the breakfast table to an abridged edition of himself, and who had just entered the grammar class at the high school, "Willie, my dear, will you pass the butter?" "Thirtainly, thir—takthes me to path anything. Butter ith a common thubthadtive, neuter gender, agreeth with hot buckwheat caketh, and ith governed by thugar—molatheth underthtood."

GARDENING FOR LADIES.—Make your bed in the morning; sew buttons on your husband's shirt; do not rake any grievances; protect the young and tender branches of your family; plant a smile of good-temper on your face, and carefully root out all angry feelings, and expect a good crop of happiness.

A SHABBILY dressed genius being treated disrespectfully by strangers, was asked why he didn't resent it. "It was my rusty old hat and coat that were slighted, and not myself," he replied. "If *they* choose to take it up and make a fuss about it they may, but I shall have nothing to do with it."

A YOUNG lady entered a country bookstore just as the proprietor had killed a rat, and said to the clerk, "I want to see 'What He Will Do With It.'" "Well," said the clerk, "if you'll just step to the rear window, you'll see him sling it into the back lot."

A PARSIMONIOUS merchant, at a fashionable dinner the other day, astonished the company, on the appearance of the fifth course, by laying down his knife and fork and exclaiming, "See here; I'll take the rest of this dinner out in money!"

FIRST SCHOOL-BOY—"You're the new boy, an't you? Look here, do you collect stamps?" *Second School-boy*—"Y-e-s." *First School-boy*—"Then there's one for you"—coming down heavily on the victim's toes and then running off.

FRENCHMEN are, by nature, dramatic. Before a gentleman of Paris severs his jugular, he so arranges his boots, table and coal-scuttle, that they may "form a picture" the moment the police dash his bedroom open.

A LADY went into a hardware store, in which there were a couple of clerks, and called for a pair of snuffers. "Suppose you take us," said one of the clerks, "we both snuff." The lady didn't buy.

"WHERE are you going so fast, Mr. Smith?" "Home, sir, home. Don't detain me. I've just bought my wife a new bonnet, and I want to get it home before the fashion changes."

AN English traveller says, "Put an American baby six months old on its feet, and it will immediately say, 'Mr. Chairman,' and call the next cradle to order."

SOME lone bachelor is guilty of the following: "Why is the heart of a lover like the sea-serpent?" "Because it is the secreter (sea-critter) of great sighs, (size.)

IN order to keep up with the progress of the age, Time is said to have abandoned the scythe and hour-glass, and purchased a mowing machine and a watch.

A YOUNG physician informed a lady that she must not allow her children "to drink much ice-water in hot weather, unless the ice were perfectly ripe."

"WHY are a gentleman in practising pistol-shooting, and a lady in carrying a muff, alike?" "Because they both do it to keep their hands in."

A MISSISSIPPI editor declines to support any political candidate whatever, on the ground that it is all that he can do to support himself.

WHAT would a pig of limited means do, that wanted to build himself a habitation? Tie a knot in his tail, and call it a pig's tie.

"POOR Joel! his head is level now if it never was before," is the inscription on a tombstone in an Iowa graveyard.

IT is, no doubt, numerically true, that if a man does not take care of No. 1, he will soon have 0 to take care of.

A DOCTOR was asked to dance the "Lancers;" he declined, but expressed his willingness to lance the dancers.

A JERSEY CITY grocer was quite smitten with his neighbor's wife. She did it with a rolling [illegible]

THE man who wrote, "I am saddest when I sing," was foolish if he sang much.

FARMERS are like fowls, neither will get full crops without industry.

CURRENT ITEMS.

AN affecting incident is told of the recent floods in Virginia. A mother and several children, living on a narrow neck of land lying between the James river and the Canal, were trying to escape, when they discovered that the bridge, their only means of safety, had been carried away. They clung to the abutments till nightfall, the water rising every hour, and no assistance near them. They had been in this condition for some time, when one of the children felt that her strength was gone, and with a wild shriek of terror she exclaimed, "Kiss me, mother, for I can't hold on any longer!" And with the warm pressure of that mother's lips upon her cheek, she was swept away and seen no more.

A MOST revolting instance of parental neglect and cruelty was recently brought to light in Cincinnati. The *Commercial* says that a citizen has an insane child, about twelve years old, whom he keeps chained like a dog in the back yard, with only a filthy cellar for shelter. She has become like a wild hyena in her habits, wallowing in filth, and feeding on rats or any putrid thing that she can get. Now that the case has been brought to light, it is to be hoped that Cincinnati will see her outraged civilization vindicated.

A CONVICT just discharged from the California State prison has set about fulfilling a vow he made at the time of his conviction, to shoot the twelve jurymen who brought in a verdict against him. He has already shot one of the jurors, but not fatally, and is now on the war-path after the others. Such conduct is likely to have an exasperating effect on jurymen, and if persisted in may result in increasing the number of verdicts leading to capital punishment.

A SINGULAR accident is related to have occurred lately in Germany. A basket-maker had a quantity of willow switches stowed away in his cellar. Going down to fetch some, his remaining away too long seemed strange, and another person went to look for him. This man did not return either, and two others went down. All four were killed by the gas generated by the fermentation of the green switches.

A RELIC OF SUPERSTITION.—At the request of his son, who is sick of consumption, a citizen of Saunderstown lately dug up the dead bodies of two of his children, in order to burn the liver and heart, intending by this ceremonial to cure his sick son, upon whose vitals, in accordance with a popular superstition, the dead were supposed to be preying.

A BOY in Providence approached another lad on Wednesday evening of last week, and pointed a pistol at him, saying, "How would you like the contents of that?" fired. The bullet entered the victim's body just below the heart. The boy was not fatally injured. The youthful assassin could not be discovered.

THE New Canaan, Conn., people were out two days and nights hunting for a mysterious wild beast which was supposed to have escaped from a menagerie, and woke up the citizens by screaming terribly nights, before they found that the noise came from an engine belonging to the Shepang Valley Railroad.

AT Valley Stream, Long Island, a man fell between two trains of cars, in attemping to jump from one to the other. With the exception of a slight contusion he was unharmed. When some of the railroad employes stooped to pick him up, he waved them off, saying, "I can pick up my own corpse."

THE caterpillars in Alabama have stripped the cotton fields bare as frost. Some cotton fields are said to be so overrun that the worm could be ladled in furrows by handfuls. Such multitudes caused a terrible alarm at first, but things are quieter now, and the planters are more hopeful.

A MAN under arrest for forgery leaped from an express train on the Boston and Maine Railroad while it was going at the rate of forty miles an hour, escaped without injury, and fled to the woods. He was hunted down, however, in the course of three days, and recaptured.

AN emigrant train on the Erie Railroad ploughed its way through a drove of cattle the other day, and killed twenty-six of the poor animals before it was stopped.

BY an awkward blunder the landlord of a hotel in Canistota, N. Y., mistook a guest for a burglar, and pounded and stabbed him before the mistake was discovered.

A CITIZEN of Fall River walked out of the attic window of his house on Thursday morning of last week, while he was fast asleep, and was badly hurt.

STOP THE CHILDREN'S ASSASSINS.

BY WILLIAM ROSS WALLACE.

* * * The discovery that venders of opium are in the habit of surreptitiously sending it, prepared in candy and lozenges, to boys' and girls' schools, seminaries and colleges. * * * * The circular also sets forth, in glowing terms, the advantages to be derived from the use. * * * The foundation for a wrecked life and a blighted career. * * * * The evil is a frightful one.—*N. Y. Ledger.*

So has flashed the blest warning, and still its flame rolls
O'er the land, thrilling horror through myriad souls:
Souls of fathers and mothers and teachers and all,
Make a quick justice on each vailed murderer fall!

Well, well do ye shudder and quickly draw breath,
At a circular sent with such sweet-coated death,
That the use will so sharpen the mind, and so please,
The pupil can take highest prizes with ease.

And thus are the idle or ambitious caught;
And thus the destruction of childhood is wrought;
For the poison once used and loved, longing will stay,
And vainly the victim would drive it away.

How the demon is not to one only confined,
How he may a whole school in the hid Tophet bind,
Fools alone cannot see, till without a swift check,
Countless bodies and souls in few years *must* be wreck.

Could a worse dagger steal through a great Nation's heart?
Was a people yet withered by more coward art?
Could a worship of Mammon more blasphemous be?
It is such worship gives to Head Devils their glee.

Fathers, mothers, and all, to the warning's great voice
Answer out, till upon the crushed fiend ye rejoice!
Heaven's self joins that warning: "'Tis crime to endure!
The assassins steal on—from their well-painted lure
The dear innocents save, and by Justice's rod
Will the Nation itself be preserved for its God!"

* * *

A BONE of CONTENTION;

—OR—

The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HAMPTON MYSTERY," "THE BAILIFF'S SCHEME," "THE LADY OF KILDARE," "THE OLD LIFE'S SHADOWS," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AN EXCITING CONVICTION.

Upon the day following the departure of Bing for Lancashire, intent upon his nefarious plot to withdraw Honor Glint from the protection of her friends, Lady Thaxter and her guests were gathered in her ladyship's *boudoir*. The hour was soon after breakfast. It had been a fancy of Lady Thaxter to make a collection of albums, each devoted to the representation of some particular country, and filled with photographs of scenery, dwellings, people and costumes, thus constituting a pictorial and veritable history of the country thus represented. The Hungarian Countess had the album illustrative of Italy open upon her knees, and she was looking through a magnifying glass at a fine photograph of Naya's of the Piazzetta of Venice, with the Palace of the Doges, the church of San Marco, and the famous winged lion upon the lofty column which it surmounts. She was silent and very thoughtful, but her thoughts scarcely seemed to be upon the picture.

It was as if she had been brought face to face with the ghosts of a dead and buried past.

Lady Thaxter was busy with some woolen embroidery, and her needle flew in and out of the meshes of the canvas, flashing in the firelight.

Honor Glint had produced a tatting-shuttle and was weaving a delicate lace; while Mrs. Early, Lady Thaxter's companion, who had just returned from her visit to Tooting, was narrating some incident of her brief journey homeward. Sir Hugh Tregaron stood in the open door-way of the conservatory, listening with the others.

It was a pleasant home scene, and its charm was deepened by the pretty industries of Lady Thaxter and Honor. The bright wools and the little pearl shuttle with its load of thread gave an effect of coziness and homelikeness to the room and the group which could have been obtained in no other way.

In the midst of Mrs. Early's graphic narration of some amusing incident of travel, a servant appeared with a familiar looking envelope upon a salver.

"A telegram for Miss Glint," he said, presenting the salver to Honor.

The young girl took up the envelope with a trembling hand, and the servant withdrew. Lady Thaxter dropped her embroidery in surprise, Lady Rothsmere aroused herself from her contemplation of her album, and Sir Hugh Tregaron approached Honor with an anxious look.

"I hope it's not from papa," murmured the girl, her white fingers fluttering at the seal of the envelope. "I fear something has happened to him. He can't have received my letter, I think."

She drew out the slip of paper, and read its contents.

They comprised these words, dated at Bolton:

"Mrs. Glint is dying—attacked with paralysis yesterday. Can live but a few hours. Must see you before she dies. In the name of Heaven, forgive and forget the wrongs you have suffered at her hands, and let your presence soothe her remorseful last hours. She calls for you continually. She cannot die in peace without seeing you. Come by first train. CLARETTE MILNER."

The paper dropped from Honor's hands. Sir Hugh, without ceremony, picked up the message and read it first to himself, then aloud.

The sensation the communication produced can be imagined.

Honor was shocked beyond the power of words to express. She had not loved Mrs. Glint, and she had suffered deeply at her hands—so deeply that time could never efface all the scars of her wounds. But for Mrs. Glint, she would never have known the pangs of homelessness and friendlessness; but for her she would never have married Darrel Moer, and so fettered and chained herself to a villain, and changed the entire current of her life. But for her, Sir Hugh Tregaron might have been spared the bitterness and anguish of his great sorrow. Yet, with all these wrongs crowding swiftly into her mind, Honor's soul throbbed with a generous pity for her enemy, and her heart yearned to soothe the supposed remorse of Mrs. Glint's last hours by her noble forgiveness.

"It really seems as if God's judgment had overtaken the woman," observed Lady Thaxter, breaking the silence. "Dying of paralysis! What shall you do, dear? Shall you write to Miss Milner?"

The girl's lovely face paled, and her vivid eyes of dusk were full of sudden pleading.

"Oh, Lady Thaxter," she exclaimed, "I must go to her! How can I ask forgiveness of my Creator if I refuse to forgive my fellow-creature? She is papa's wife, and he loves her. How could I meet him on his return, and tell him that I scorned his wife's last prayer to me for forgiveness, and that although I was but a few hours' distance from her, I yet refused to go to her?"

"You are right," said Lady Thaxter, with decision. "One cannot be governed, in a case like this, by a merely human sense of justice. At first thought, I desired you to write to her and to remain here, but her remorse for her treatment of you must be terrible. No doubt your presence by her bedside, and the assurance of your forgiveness from your own lips, will soothe her as nothing else will do. Still, I will not give a governing opinion. Hugh, you have known Mrs. Glint. What should Honor do?"

"She had best follow the dictates of her own generous heart," said Sir Hugh, with a look of tender reverence in his grave gray eyes, as he looked upon the girl's agitated face. "Honor is actuated by the noblest principles of our holy Christian religion. If she chooses to 'do good to them that despitefully use' her, she is only obeying the precepts of One who was all-forgiving, and I would not hold her back from what she deems her duty."

Honor flashed upon the young Baronet a grateful look, and she said:

"I must go by the first train, and I pray Heaven that I may arrive in time."

Not a doubt obtruded itself upon any of them—not even upon Sir Hugh, who was so watchful over Honor—of the genuineness of the telegram. Why should they doubt it? They could not see that Darrel Moer could in any way be benefited by the appearance of Honor Glint at Bolton. The very simplicity of Bing's *ruse* gave it the greater semblance of truth.

"I will consult a Bradshaw," said Sir Hugh. "I am confident that there is an up express which leaves Euston Square about noon. It's now ten o'clock. I will order the carriage in time. But who are to compose the party? You will have your maid, Honor. I shall go of course—"

"Not of course, Hugh," said Lady Thaxter, as her nephew paused. "My dear boy, you must not travel to Lancashire as Honor's escort. Remember that she is bound to another man, that she is not even your promised wife. Forgive me if I wound you, Hugh, but I love you both, and I fear that your attentions will compromise Honor. You are not her brother or relative, nor even her betrothed husband. You must consider her fair name above every thing else in the world, and I assure you, dear Hugh, that I cannot approve your project of accompanying the dear girl to Lancashire."

Sir Hugh's countenance showed that he was enduring an inward conflict. He said gravely:

"I see the propriety of your suggestions, Aunt Julia. I must relinquish the pleasure of escorting Honor upon her journey, but who is to go in my place? You cannot go, Aunt Julia?"

"No," replied Lady Thaxter, half regretfully, for she had grown to love Honor very tenderly, "my engagements detain me here. There is the flower-show to-day, and engagements to dine to-day and to-morrow, and there is also the Clanmorris ball this evening, and a host of other engagements which I particularly wish Lady Rothsmere to accept."

"I shall be glad to go," said Mrs. Early. "I think with Lady Thaxter that it would be better for you, Sir Hugh, to remain in London. We shall not need your escort. I am an experienced traveller, and can take good care of Miss Glint. I defy any harm to come to her while in my charge."

Mrs. Early was a shrewd and sensible woman, and Sir Hugh felt that he could not do better than to trust Honor to her care. He acquiesced in the arrangement without demur.

"You will arrive at Bolton about five o'clock, if the train leaves Euston Square at twelve," observed the young Cornish Baronet thoughtfully. "You will thus arrive before dark, and will not suffer greatly from fatigue."

"I advise you to proceed directly to a hotel upon your arrival," said Lady Thaxter, who was noted for her attention to minor points, such as this. "The Red House—as I think your papa's place is called, Honor—must necessarily be in a state of confusion, and you will promote your comfort by securing a good lodging at a hotel beforehand. And be sure and get your dinner before going to see Mrs. Glint. There is nothing like fortifying one's-self through one's stomach against depressing influences. I shall expect a telegram from you, to inform me of Mrs. Glint's state to-morrow, and every day until her illness terminates. And, my dear Honor, we shall look for you and long for you each day until your return, which I pray may be as soon as possible."

Honor made a suitable reply, and withdrew with Mrs. Early to prepare for her journey. Sir Hugh found and studied a Bradshaw.

Honor went to her own room, finding her maid engaged in trimming a dinner dress for expected use.

"I sha'n't need that, Lucky," she said, sighing. "Hang it up in the wardrobe, and pack my dressing bag for a journey. Mrs. Glint is dying, and I am going to Bolton by the first train. You are to accompany me."

Lucky obeyed her young mistress, and deftly packed the dressing bag, while Honor proceeded to exchange the cashmere morning dress for her gray travelling suit.

She was partially disrobed when a low knock was heard upon her door, and the beautiful Hungarian Countess entered her room.

"Can I be of any assistance to you, Miss Glint?" she inquired.

Honor thanked her, but replied in the negative.

"I want to say," continued the Countess, her lovely face flushed with feeling, her radiant eyes full of tenderness, "how I admire your brave, resolute, tender nature; how I am pleased at your prompt and pitying response to the appeal of this person who seems to have wronged you. I do not know why it is, Miss Glint, but I have loved you from the moment I first saw you. I have felt as if our lives were strangely entwined. It may be that I can be of help to you in the great trouble shadowing your life. If I can help you I will."

She came nearer to Honor and kissed the girl's cheek softly. A tress of hair had escaped from its bounds, and was straying over Honor's bared white shoulders. The Countess pressed the golden lock to her lips, and restored it to its confinement.

As she was about to retreat, and Honor took up her dress to put it on, the Hungarian Countess caught sight of a vivid, irregular scar upon the girl's left wrist.

It was nearly the counterpart of that scar upon Hilda Floyd's arm, which had so materially assisted in the identification of Lord Waldemar's heiress.

Every trace of color fled from Lady Rothsmere's cheeks and lips as she beheld this scar, so like to that she had seen upon the arm of Hilda Floyd.

"That mark—what is it?" she asked, in a panting whisper.

Honor, full of surprise, replied courteously:

"I don't know, Madame. I fancy it must have been inflicted with a knife in my early childhood, but I do not remember."

The Hungarian Countess made a little swoop forward and caught the girl's arm, and scanned its white and rounded surface with eager, dilating eyes.

There, above the elbow, imprinted in the tender flesh as if by a hot iron, was a slender, irregular dagger-shaped mark of the most vivid scarlet. It was evidently a birth mark.

A strange, low cry broke from the lips of the foreign Countess. She tried to speak, but fell forward—as she had done once before in the same house—in a death-like state of unconsciousness.

Honor flew to the bell, pealing an alarm through the house. Then, with the aid of Lucky, she bore the form of her visitor to a couch. Leaving her frightened maid to minister to the Countess, Honor hurried on her dress and made herself presentable.

A servant appeared, and Honor dispatched her in quest of Lady Thaxter, who came without an instant's delay.

By this time Honor was chafing the limp hands of the Countess, and had loosened her ladyship's corsage.

"What has happened, my dear?" asked the hostess, in astonishment. "Is Lady Rothsmere ill?"

"She has only fainted," answered Honor. "Her heart beats, although but faintly. She seems to be subject to these attacks. Ought not a physician to be sent for?"

Lady Thaxter bent over her guest with anxious interest.

"She must be removed to her room immediately," said her ladyship. "Lady Rothsmere is not one to faint at a mere trifle. I could almost think she had been subject to some overpowering excitement. Her maid may know what to do for her."

The Countess was transported to her own rooms with the greatest care, and her maid, an elderly Hungarian woman, who was devoted to her beautiful mistress, declining the attendance of a physician, engaged in promoting Lady Rothsmere's recovery.

Lady Thaxter did not quit the side of her guest until the Countess opened her eyes, looking about her with a wild and startled gaze. A strengthening draught had been prepared for her ladyship by the orders of Lady Thaxter, and this was administered. White as death, and with a strange weariness, the Countess sank back upon her pillow, and seemed to fall asleep.

It was then that Lady Thaxter stole out of the room and rejoined Honor.

The young girl had finished her toilet, and was fully attired for her journey, even to her little hat and short coquettish gray vail, which terminated at her little spirited chin. Lucky was also ready, with her young lady's dressing bag upon her arm.

"Is the Countess better, dear Lady Thaxter?" asked Honor anxiously. "Do you think she will be ill?"

"No, my dear. She has fallen asleep through sheer exhaustion of the vital forces, but will awake herself again. It was a very odd attack. She must be much more delicate than I thought, and yet she told me only yesterday that her constitution was 'like tempered steel.' You must not carry an anxious heart away with you, dear, upon Lady Rothsmere's account."

"I shall not see her again before I go," said Honor. "Please give her my best love, dear Lady Thaxter, and tell her I was sorry to go without seeing her."

They descended to the boudoir, where Sir Hugh awaited them. Here Mrs. Early joined them.

A little later the carriage arrived, and Honor, with her maid and Mrs. Early, took their departure. Sir Hugh Tregaron accompanied them to the station, and obtained a first-class compartment for their exclusive use. He waited until they had steamed out of the station in the swift northward-bound train, and then returned to Park Lane.

Lady Thaxter met him at the drawing-room door.

"How is the Countess, Aunt Julia?" he asked.

"Much better, Hugh. She is up again and fully dressed. She is in the boudoir now, and has asked to see Honor. Finding Honor gone, she has asked for you. Go to her, my dear boy, and amuse her. I will come to you in an hour or two, so soon as my dress-maker, who is awaiting me up stairs, shall have gone."

Sir Hugh proceeded to the boudoir, and Lady Thaxter hastened to keep her appointment with her dress-maker.

The young Baronet found the Countess reclining amid silken cushions upon a broad low couch near the fire, in the boudoir, and in a position to command a view of all the vivid brightness within the conservatory.

She was still very pale, but her blue eyes burned with a feverish glitter. She half arose at Sir Hugh's entrance, and said, in a quick, eager voice:

"Sir Hugh, be seated, please. I have asked you to come to me, that I may put to you a few questions. I desire our interview to be strictly confidential. You may think me intrusive, but I beg you to gratify my—my curiosity. Nay, it is not curiosity. I have a motive, even though I cannot tell it to you."

"Any information which I can impart to you, Lady Rothsmere, I will gladly hasten to give," replied Sir Hugh, taking a seat near her.

"Who, then, is this young girl—this Honor Glint?"

The Countess waited for the young Baronet's answer in a breathless suspense. He noticed that she quivered with agitation.

"She is, unhappily, the wife of Darrel Moer," answered Sir Hugh, "although she left him at the altar. She is a maiden, yet bound by ties she cannot break to one of the greatest scoundrels in God's universe!"

"Yes, yes, I know," breathed the Countess. "I know all this, Sir Hugh; *but who is she?*"

"She is the daughter of Captain Glint, of the merchant marine, commander of the steamship *Argonaut*, plying between Liverpool and Alexandria," replied Sir Hugh Tregaron gravely.

The Hungarian Countess uttered a quick ejaculation, that seemed burdened with a keen disappointment.

"Sir Hugh," she exclaimed, "I am nearly a stranger to you, but you know me well by reputation. You must know that I am incapable of inquiring into Miss Glint's history with any unworthy motive. Some years ago—chance threw in my way—that is, I learned some singular facts which may bear upon Miss Glint's history," said the Countess disjointedly. "I believe that there has been a foul wrong done to one of the proudest families in England, and I believe that some young girl has been equally wronged. I seem to speak mysteriously. My thoughts are in chaos. The facts that came to my knowledge years ago may assist in unravelling a terrible mystery. I may have been sent to England as the instrument of an avenging Providence. But I must know more about Miss Glint. I cannot resist the conviction that she is connected with the story I have heard. Oh, Sir Hugh, is there not some hope, however faint—is there not the glimmer of a hope, that Miss Glint is not the own daughter of Captain Glint?"

The Countess bent forward, her hands clasped in a piteous entreaty.

The young Cornish Baronet began to share her excitement and agitation. He drew his chair nearer to her unconsciously. His grandly noble face had grown pale, and his voice was uneven as he responded:

"Lady Rothsmere, your singular questioning and your frank appeal to me shall be met with complete unreserve. I cannot understand your allusions, but it is possible that you may hold in your hands a clue to a mystery which I would give much to solve. Honor is not the own daughter of Captain Glint—"

"Not his daughter! Not— Oh, Heaven!"

The Countess started up wild and frantic, but sank back upon the couch, one jewelled hand clutching convulsively at her bosom.

"She is not his daughter, Madame," said Sir Hugh, striving to speak calmly, yet with an anxious look in his gray eyes. "Captain Glint was never married until two years since, when he married a widowed lady—the same whose illness and approaching death were telegraphed to Honor this morning. Honor is not even his relative. He found her when a little child, years ago, in a Mediterranean port, in the arms of an English woman who was wandering about the streets, ill, and upon the eve of delirium, if not at the moment actually delirious."

The Countess gave a long, sobbing sigh.

"What port?" she asked breathlessly.

"Valetta, Madame."

"Valetta! Valetta! Captain Glint found the child at Valetta! What name did the nurse give as the child's?"

"Not any, Lady Rothsmere. The woman only said she wished to go to England. At any rate, if she said more, I do not know it. Honor told me the story once when in great agitation, and I may not have the facts correctly. I do not remember the nurse's name, even if I knew it. The woman was a nurse, I understand, and not the child's mother. I cannot even remember what became of the woman, although I believe she was put ashore at the first port and sent to a hospital. Ah, yes, I do remember now. She grew delirious, and Captain Glint feared she would die. He obtained admission for her into a hospital at Marseilles through the English Consul, and when he next stopped at Marseilles he discovered that the woman had recovered from her illness and was gone. He never heard of her again."

"And this is all you know, Sir Hugh?"

"All, Lady Rothsmere. Honor can tell you more."

"One question," breathed the Countess, agitatedly—"do you know whether Honor Glint has in her possession a peculiar ornament, a small black onyx ball, surrounded by a tiny band of gold set with minute diamonds? The ball looks as if it were solid, but is really hollow. Does she possess such an ornament?"

She waited as if her life hung upon his answer.

Sir Hugh was surprised at the question, but he hastened to answer it.

"Yes," he said. "Honor has such an ornament, which she has worn at her watch chain. But it is not hollow, I think, Madame. Honor has mentioned that she has never been able to open it, and she believes it solid."

Lady Rothsmere rose up, white and stern, but wondrously lovely, her blue eyes glowing with a radiance that was as far beyond their usual lustre as the sunlight surpasses in brightness the starlight.

"I am convinced!" she said, and her voice rang out clear and sweet like the notes of a flute. "Sir Hugh, I thank you for your confidence. I must see Honor and Captain Glint. I have much to do. But, if Providence does not forestall my efforts, I shall right a wrong which is beyond your conception; I will place young Honor in a position which is far above your own in a social point of view; I will free her from the hated shackles that bind her to Darrel Moer; I will give her into your arms one of the noblest, best born, fairest brides the sun ever shone upon! Only be patient, as I must be. Trust me, I repeat, Sir Hugh. I am your friend and hers. Trust me. This mystery shall be cleared!"

She gave him her hand, and slowly went into the conservatory, with a gesture that signified her wish to be alone.

CHAPTER XXXII.

HOW BING'S PLAN PROSPERED.

It was about five o'clock of the gray March afternoon that Honor Glint, with Mrs. Early and Lucky Banner, arrived at Bolton. In accordance with the advice of Lady Thaxter, they entered a cab and were driven to a hotel. Bing was lounging about the station, skilfully disguised, and, with a chuckle of satisfaction, followed them to their destination.

"So far good!" he muttered. "They are doing precisely as I expected. I am sure to succeed."

Mrs. Early demanded of the hotel clerk a private sitting-room with three bedrooms attached, and was duly gratified. A cozy little parlor overlooking the street, with a bedroom opening off either side of it, and a third bedroom adjoining one of the others, were placed at the disposal of the party. Mrs. Early ordered dinner, to be served in the little parlor, which order was obeyed during the following hour.

Soon after six o'clock Mrs. Early ordered a cab, and Honor proceeded to attire herself in her outer garments.

"I may be detained late, Lucky," she said to her faithful maid, "and I may even not be back until morning. If I find Mrs. Glint very near death, I may remain until all is over."

"I wish you were not going, Miss," said the girl. "I feel somehow as if something were going to happen—something unpleasant, I mean. I wish you would let me go with you."

"It will be better for you to remain here and have some hot tea for us, Lucky," said Mrs. Early. "I shall go with Miss Glint, and we will probably be tired when we return."

"I beg you will remain at home also, Mrs. Early," exclaimed Honor. "I know Bolton thoroughly. I shall go to the Red House in a cab, and return in a cab. No harm can possibly come to me. And I would not subject you to the inconvenience of spending hours perhaps in a house of sickness, among strangers. I beg you to allow me to go alone."

Mrs. Early shook her head smilingly, and buttoned her cloak tightly over her chest.

"My dear," she said, "the last words Sir Hugh Tregaron said to me to-day were to the effect that I must not lose sight of you during our absence from home. I intend to obey him almost literally. You are placed in my care as a precious charge by Sir Hugh, and by Lady Thaxter, and, although I know we are in your own familiar town, and that no harm is likely to come to you, I shall yet not permit you to go outside these doors without me. Better to be too guarded, my dear, than to be not guarded enough."

Honor made no further objections, and with a last injunction to Lucky, she departed from the safe shelter of her rooms and descended with Mrs. Early to the street. The cab was in waiting. They entered it, giving the order, and were driven through the familiar streets toward the pleasant outskirt in which Capt. Glint's house was situated.

The cab came to a halt at last in the growing dusk before the gate of the Red House, and the ladies alighted.

"You can wait," said Mrs. Early, addressing the cabman. "We may be out again directly, but if we are likely to remain inside for some time, we will send you word and dismiss you."

A man who was lurking in the lawn shrubbery, wearing a heavy red beard and wig, and a slouching overcoat that came to his heels, chuckled softly under his breath:

"Better and better. Any one would think that this woman is my fellow-conspirator. She makes my work easy."

The man thus lurking in the garden of the Red House was Darrel Moer's valet, Bing.

The cabman assented to the lady's proposition, and Honor opened the gate and led the way up the walk.

Bing retreated still further into the shadow of the shrubbery, and seemed to be at work.

As Honor and Mrs. Early approached nearer to the house, they noticed that it was brilliantly lighted in all the lower rooms. The windows were still uncurtained, and the lights flared broadly out upon the darkening lawn.

"It does not look like a house of death, my dear," said Mrs. Early, slackening her pace.

"Still, it's very silent," answered Honor. "Oh! I hope—I hope Mrs. Glint is still alive!"

Without another word they pressed on to the pretty stone porch, and Honor's own hands sounded the knocker of the house that had so long been her home.

A boy in livery, plentifully besprinkled with brass buttons, came to the door. He was a new acquisition at the Red House, and was apparently not yet at home in his position.

Honor advanced into the little hall.

"How is Mrs. Glint now?" she asked breathlessly.

The boy looked perplexed and wondering.

"She's about the same, Miss," he said, in a puzzled tone. "I don't know no difference in her."

"Will you tell Miss Milner that Miss Glint is come?" said Honor, trying to speak calmly.

She moved past the bewildered boy in buttons, and advanced into the drawing-room, Mrs. Early following. The boy closed the door and hurried up stairs.

This was the moment Bing had awaited.

He hurried down to the gate and accosted the driver.

"Here, you cabby," he exclaimed, assuming a strong Irish accent as a greater disguise. "The lady will stay. Be off wid ye. Here's yer money."

He handed the cabman a half-sovereign. That worthy examined the piece by his lamp, bit it, rung it, and then, satisfied of its genuineness, thrust it into his pocket, gathered up his reins and drove away in haste, returning whence he had come. Evidently, as no change had been demanded, the cabman believed that the lady had overpaid him through mistake, and he would not give her an opportunity to repair her supposed error.

Bing watched the cab until it had disappeared from sight, and then he hurried swiftly down the road in an opposite direction. Not many rods distant, beyond a curve in the road, and in a blind alley-way bordered on each side by high stone-walls, was a second cab without a driver, the horse hitched to a projecting stone in one of the walls.

Bing unhitched the horse, mounted the box and drove to the gate of the Red House, where he halted.

This horse and cab belonged to a man whom Bing knew well, and the valet had borrowed the equipage for an hour, promising to leave it at a certain spot a few miles distant, where its owner now was awaiting its arrival. With the expenditure of five pounds, Bing had secured this man's coöperation in his plans, so far as he chose to reveal them, and his silence in regard to the matter also. He had told him nothing beyond what was absolutely necessary, betraying none of his ulterior schemes, even though he knew he could thoroughly depend upon the fellow, who was a man after his own heart.

And now, with an infernal glee rioting in his soul, Bing awaited the appearance of Honor and her friend.

They, meanwhile, were seated in the parlor of the Red House, awaiting in anxious expectancy the appearance of Miss Milner.

"Mrs. Glint must be dead, I think," said Mrs. Early, in a suppressed voice.

The clicking of metallic boot heels upon the oaken stairs was heard, the rustle of silk, and the door opened and Miss Milner swept into the room.

Honor sprang up, pale with excitement.

"How is she?" she asked, in a fluttering voice. "She is not dead? Tell me that I am in time!"

Miss Milner indulged in a supercilious stare at Honor, and at her companion.

"In time for what, if I may ask?" she demanded.

"To see Mrs. Glint before she dies," said Honor, choking. "Oh, am I in time, Clarette?"

Before Miss Milner could reply, there was a second clicking of boot heels, heavier this time, upon the oaken stairs, another rustling of silk, and again the door opened, giving admittance upon this occasion to—Mrs. Glint herself.

Honor retreated a step in amazement, scarcely believing the evidence of her senses.

But Mrs. Glint was the impersonation of health, looking full-blown and red. She had attired herself hastily in a tight-fitting gown of black silk sprinkled over with gold-colored spots, and wore an amplitude of gold chains and rings. She looked supercilious, like her daughter, and was withal apparently troubled and anxious as to the errand of Honor. She glanced at Mrs. Early with marked disfavor.

"So you have come back to this house after I expelled you from it, Miss?" she exclaimed testily. "Certainly you are the last person I ever expected to see here, but you have impudence enough, it seems, for anything. What do you want here?"

Honor sank back in the chair from which she had arisen, completely nerveless.

"I—I received a telegram this morning, in London," she faltered, "stating that you were dying, Mrs. Glint, and that you desired my forgiveness and my presence at your death-bed. I came on by the first train—"

"You were very accommodating, I'm sure," sneered Mrs. Glint. "But I didn't telegraph to you, and I don't believe you received any telegram. I've no intention of dying at present, and if I had, I shouldn't send for you, you may rest assured, Miss. As to your forgiveness, pray keep it until it's called for."

Honor turned to Miss Milner, beginning to grow calm.

"The telegram was signed with your name, Clarette," she said. "Did you not send it to me?"

"No, I did not," affirmed Miss Milner disdainfully. "I don't believe you received any telegram. Where is it? Show it."

"I did not bring it with me—"

"Oh, no!" sneered Mrs. Glint. "Of course not. I can't understand why you are back here, Miss. A young woman so much run after as you are had best hide herself, I think. I cannot permit my innocent Clarette to be contaminated with your presence. If you've come here for money, you won't get it. Mr. Darrel Moer and Sir Hugh Tregaron have been here inquiring after you with a persistency that should be a shame to any modest girl. I had a letter from a lodging-house keeper at Southport informing me of your grand receptions and drawing-rooms at her house, and saying that she had been obliged to turn you out of her house. She said you were gone to London. I suppose you've spent your money, and have come back with this—this person to black-mail me? You may even hope to recover your old place in this house. You may as well relinquish the idea, Miss."

Mrs. Early rose up with quiet dignity.

"Miss Glint received this morning a telegram from Bolton signed with the name of Clarette Milner, begging her in the name of Heaven to come to your death-bed without delay," said Mrs. Early. "Full of pitying forgiveness, she came at once, and I came with her to protect her. Evidently the telegram was sent for some base purpose. I am not sure, madam, that you did not sent it, in anticipation of the vulgar triumph of a reception like this."

"*You* are not sure?" cried Mrs. Glint. "And who are you, pray? Who cares for your opinion? You're a—a creature—a person I would not deign to look at outside my own house. You and Honor are well matched. Leave my house," and her infuriated voice rose to a scream. "Go this minute, or I'll call the police. My servants shall put you out."

Honor's proud face flushed. A haughty look shone in her vivid eyes. Without a word, but in a haughty silence, she passed from the room and from the house. Mrs. Early, with unruffled dignity, followed her slowly.

Mrs. Glint and her daughter pursued the visitors to the door, which they slammed and double-locked after them.

Half-way down the walk Honor stole her hand into that of Mrs. Early, and said:

"I would have spared you this, dear friend, if I could only have suspected the truth. I know Clarette is malicious. Do you think she could have sent that telegram? She must have discovered my whereabouts from Miss Brown, who listened at my door more than once, and who must have been aware that I was in London under the protection of Lady Thaxter."

"That is the right explanation, dear. Such a cowardly, dastardly insult! It's a pity that woman might not really be ill and send for you in vain. We will take the first train to town in the morning. My poor child, how you must have suffered since your papa's marriage to that odious woman!"

They passed out at the gate, and made their way to the cab. It was now dusk, and they did not see that the driver and the cab were not the same they had employed. They entered the vehicle and closed the door. The blinds were already up.

"To the hotel," said Mrs. Early.

Bing cracked his whip, the horse bounded forward, and the cab rolled swiftly away into the darkness.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

* * *

OLD-TIME AXIOMS.

The following I find in my Scrap-book pasted there more than a score and a half of years ago. I reproduce them to show to the present generation what quaint ideas were promulgated by the teachers of our fathers and mothers of the olden time:

"An Independent Man is one who blacks his own boots; who can live without whisky and tobacco; who earns at least a penny a day more than he spends; and who can, upon a pinch, shave himself with brown soap and cold water without a mirror.

"A Great Man is one who can lead his children to obey him when out of his sight.

"A Hospitable Man is never ashamed of his dinner when a friend unexpectedly drops in to dine with him.

"A Good Wife exhibits her love for her husband by seeking to promote his welfare, and by administering to his comfort.

"A Sensible Wife looks for her enjoyment at *home*—a silly one, *abroad*.

"A Wise Girl would win a lover by practising those virtues which secure admiration when personal charms have faded.

"A Simple Girl endeavors to recommend herself by the exhibition of frivolous accomplishments, and by a mawkish sentiment which has as little to do with a true heart as has the gaudy dress she wears.

"A Good Girl always respects herself, and is thus sure to be respected by others." C.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1872.

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ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce sts., New York.

Corporations Attempting to Tyrannize Over the People.

It is announced that two of the great railroad corporations, having long lines extending out of this city, have combined to raise their freights twenty-five per cent.

This is a very large advance—one quarter—and it affects, directly or indirectly, almost every member of the community. Directly, it affects the producers, the shippers and the merchants; indirectly, it comes home to the consumers, on whom almost the entire burden falls. It results in a rise in prices of the articles sent over the road, sufficient to reimburse the increased cost of transportation, and those who use and consume the articles pay, in the end, the increased cost.

The interests of these great, soulless corporations are so large that there is always a very strong tendency for them to unite, and oppress the public, instead of persevering in a competition which keeps prices down.

For the time being the cost of transporting passengers cannot be advanced, because the rates of fare are regulated, or at least restricted, by statute. But what reliance is to be placed upon the preservation of this barrier?

The corporations are rich. The Legislature—a large proportion of it—it is notorious, can be had, at any time, for money. All that is requisite is to pay enough; and while there is, for the present, a law on the statute book preventing the levying of too high fares, there is no such wholesome check—or if there is, it is disregarded—fixing a limit to the price of votes. The railroad companies have the money, and there is no reason to expect that a very long time will elapse before they buy votes enough to permit them to raise the fares.

A good deal has been said lately about the purification of the bench; and all must agree that an incorruptible judiciary is essential to the preservation of our rights. We think, however, that it would be well for those who have taken an active interest in these matters, and who have them in hand, to consider whether the great railroad corporations and the richest corporators are not growing stronger instead of weaker in the courts; whether their representatives on the bench are not increasing in number, while at the same time they carry with them more weight, from being unsuspected.

There will be a great struggle yet between the people and these gigantic moneyed corporations. At first the people are taken at great disadvantage, because it is a kind of warfare in which they are not well versed; but we have too much confidence in the intelligence and virtue of the masses to doubt their ultimate triumph.

Habitual Criminals—Severe Punishment.

The doctrine which we have advocated, that culprits who have manifested a chronic tendency to crime, or who have been guilty of crimes of a very deliberate and atrocious character, ought to be permanently confined, is receiving considerable support from the judges of the criminal courts in England. Sometimes the principle is carried to an extent which seems severe. In a recent case, a man was sentenced to seven years' penal servitude and five years' police surveillance, for stealing sixpence worth of sand. But it was his seventh conviction.

An Old Lawsuit, Long Drawn Out.

On the twenty-seventh of July, a suit was called up in the Vice-Chancellor's Court, in London, which was begun in the year 1725—*one hundred and forty-seven years ago!*

Between fourteen and fifteen thousand dollars had been paid into court, in the progress of the suit, prior to 1760—one hundred and twelve years ago—and had not been claimed until now, from that day to this.

An inquiry was directed by the Vice-Chancellor, to ascertain who was entitled to the cash. And so the suit remains unfinished yet.

A Kansas Man Wants a Wife.

A bachelor who advertises, in the *Clay County* (Kansas) *Independent*, for a wife, gives the following description of himself:

> "He neither smokes nor chews tobacco, drinks whisky nor plays billiards. He has the reputation of having some brains, and is heir to some property, but hopes those now in possession of it will live long to enjoy it. He makes his living by work and is proud of it. He belongs to that old-fogy class of men who still believe in the purity and goodness of woman. He is neither old nor extremely bad looking. Is of good character, has a warm heart and a clear head, and thinks he will make a pretty fair husband—at least is willing to be taken on trial by a good woman."

An Extraordinary Girl.

The Kingston *Freeman* says that they have a girl in Kingston who turns the scales at one hundred and seventy-two pounds, and all the boys' heads from thirteen to thirty years of age.

"Gambling is a Vice which I Cannot Overcome"—A Warning.

WILLIAM J. AIKEN, a member of the police force of this city, was recently detected in the act of committing a burglary, and on being arrested, confessed to having been guilty of a long series of similar crimes. He has since been sentenced to twenty years' hard labor in the State prison.

When the usual question was put to him—what he had to say why sentence should not be passed upon him—he freely admitted his guilt, but remarked, "*Gambling is a vice which I cannot overcome.*"

In these few words the ruined and wretched man—who wept bitterly when he was reminded of his wife and children—stated a terrible truth, which, unfortunately, is applicable not only to himself, but as a rule, with scarcely an exception, to all who have once become addicted to the practice of gambling. The habit furnishes a kind of intellectual intoxication, which is worse, if anything can be worse, even than the intoxication of strong drink. No one, after yielding to it, seems to be able to overcome the weakness—to resist the temptation.

The words of this doomed criminal are full of warning to the young men of the country: "Gambling is a vice which I cannot overcome!" Cut out those words. Paste them in your commonplace-book. Whenever you are tempted to play any game, for a single dollar or a single cent, remember AIKEN in his gloomy cell in the State prison, and his terrible confession: "*Gambling is a vice which I cannot overcome.*"

Abuse of the Office of Coroner.

In many cases we think the power pertaining to the office of coroner is greatly abused. Post-mortem examinations are made where there is no occasion for them, just for the sake of the fees. The cause of death is well known—is apparent—and the friends of the deceased are pained at the idea of the corpse being cut up, by cold and unfeeling hands; but the mere fact that death has occurred suddenly, or away from home, affords sufficient warrant for the coroner and his surgeons to disregard the natural feelings of those to whom the sudden death of a friend is already sufficient affliction.

Once in a while we observe a pleasing exception to this practice. For instance, the other day, at Worcester, Mass., an unfortunate and melancholy invalid went into his sleeping room, and standing up before his mirror, inflicted a horrible gash, with a razor, in his throat, severing the main artery. The blood spurted six feet or more, spattering the walls and furniture. He then sat down beside his bed, where he was found almost immediately by some members of his family. The account of this tragedy concludes with the statement that the coroner was summoned, and viewed the body, but did not consider an inquest necessary.

Now all this is strictly compatible with the common-sense view of the case. What would it have availed for the coroner to have summoned a jury, and for one or more unfeeling surgeons to have hacked to pieces the dead body of the unfortunate suicide, and have reported, in scientific, but generally unintelligible terms, that the lungs of the deceased were diseased, but his heart and liver were healthy?

We wish that rare exceptions, like this, might become the rule in all similar cases.

"Death is the King of Terrors, to All Men."

"I tell you," said a statesman who was opposing the argument that imprisonment for life is a more dreaded punishment than hanging—"I tell you that *death is the king of terrors to all men.*"

Two powerful advocates for capital punishment have lately appeared in the persons of the Editor of the London *Times*, and the State Attorney at Chicago, Illinois. The *Times*, after recapitulating the details of several murders, for which the extreme penalty of the law has been inflicted on the perpetrators, says:

> "In the minds of the vast majority of the English public, there is only one punishment which would bear the character of an adequate retribution for such offences, and that is an ignominious death."

And the State Attorney at Chicago says:

> "*The punishment should be death in all cases of unprovoked murder.*"

Mismanagement of Corporations.

Recent developments in England show that railroad corporations and insurance companies are just about as badly mismanaged there as here; and the doubt is becoming very common, and deeply seated, whether there is any safety in trusting to "directors" to manage the business of large concerns.

There was a time when the honor of being intrusted with the care and control of great interests—of other people's property—seemed to influence the trustees to the exercise of skill and good faith more powerfully than at present.

Are we deteriorating in morals—in integrity?

A Boy's Generosity Rewarded.

A suit has just been tried in an English court in which a poor man sought to recover damages for an injury done him by a dray belonging to a rich company. The plaintiff's principal witness was "one of the boys of the Shoeblack Brigade," who was blacking his shoes when the injury was inflicted by the dray, crushing the man's hand as he stood leaning over the top of a post. The shoeblack testified that "the man had got him to clean his shoes for nothing, having no money, and that, in addition, he gave the man a halfpenny to enable the man to go over the bridge." This led to further questioning, and the boy's account of himself so pleased those who heard it, that the judge and the counsel on both sides each presented him a shilling, so that the little fellow received an ample reward for the diligence with which, as his evidence showed, he pursued his business, and the act of good-nature which he had done.

Poisoned Sweetmeats.

Mr. Pattinson, an analytical chemist, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, has been making an examination into the quality of sweetmeats, such as are usually sold to children.

He found that out of thirty-five different kinds, obtained from twenty different dealers, twenty-eight were colored with poisonous material. The poison most commonly used is some preparation of lead.

The diseases caused by lead poison are among the most terrible which are produced by anything.

This experiment will serve as a warning to parents to practice greater care in providing sweetmeats for their children. If they are to be used at all, it is safer to make them at home. Then you know what they contain.

HEEDLESS LETTER-WRITING.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

If all the small carelessnesses of one's life were to be brought together into one view, it would not only amaze the subject of them, but it would be difficult to persuade any one that he was ever careful at all. So fruitful is life of every-day results, that what may be called the offal is not noticed.

The words too many, the things superfluous, the things forgotten, the things done bunglingly, the absolute mistakes, the time wasted in doing over aright things done wrong, the waste of force by indirection, by bad aim, by ill-judged intensity, if it could every day be summed up, and presented as a whole, would take the conceit, it is to be hoped, out of self-satisfied men.

If one considers the human mind as a collection of exquisite tools, and watches their use, specially or generally, he cannot but feel that the average man is a most unskillful, because heedless bungler.

There comes to mind just now a good instance of heedlessness. If one considers the degree of intelligence prevailing, he might, while admitting that mistakes occur occasionally in directing letters, suppose that such mistakes were rare. What then shall be thought of the report of the Dead Letter Department of the General Post-office? Of course a man may post a letter in haste without having affixed a stamp to it, but there were four hundred thousand men forgot the postage stamp last year!

That a man should send a letter without designating the county to which it was destined we can easily conceive, especially if written in New England, where counties play a far less conspicuous part than in Southern and Western States; but to neglect to affix the *State* to which it was destined to the superscription, will strike one as a rare carelessness. Yet, during the last year, fifty-eight thousand persons sent letters without indicating either the county or the State to which they are to go! But there were three thousand persons who sent their letters to the post-office without any direction at all upon them—no name, no State, no county, no town—blank and bare!

Vast sums of money in the aggregate are every year sent through the mails, and the per cent. of loss, when the aggregate sums are considered, are trifling; and yet last year more than three million dollars of checks and bills came to the dead letter office. Much of this could be returned to the sender, but large sums remained for which neither party, sender nor receiver, could be found.

Every newspaper office has to deal with this question of heedlessness. Men send three dollars for a year's subscription thus:

> MR. EDITOR: Please send the N. Y. *Ledger* to Peter Sharp, to Washington, and inclosed is three dollars.
> PETER SHARP.

Now, as there are probably several hundred post-offices whose designation is *Washington*, and as there is no hint of the State or county in which Peter Sharp's Washington is to be found, the *Ledger* may go a thousand miles away from the true Washington, and be read by some grateful postmaster who is not unwilling to have somebody supply him with *Ledgers* without cost.

But a month passes, and the mail some day brings in a furious epistle.

> WASHINGTON, Jan. 1, 1872.
> SIR—I sent you, more than a month ago, three dollars for the *Ledger*. You have kept the money, but never sent the paper. Unless you send the paper, or refund the money, I shall consider you a swindler.
> PETER SHARP.

Here it is again—the town—but which, of hundreds of towns with the same name? You turn to the postmark on the envelope. Unluckily the postmark is only half legible, and the *State* is wholly obscure. While PETER SHARP goes on month after month charging the *Ledger* with fraud, he is himself the only culprit. If he knew how to date a letter, or give a direction, he would have had no trouble.

There is another piece of carelessness quite common, in the illegible writing of one's name at the end of a letter. Men are so familiar with their own signature that they think everybody must see it as they do. One dashes it in with such haste that three or four letters run into a mere waving line. Others flourish it till it looks like a snarl of silk. Some have a kind of monogram, the letters being worked up to each other in a manner so unusual that only the initiated can guess what it is.

In many instances the only way to direct a return letter must be by cutting out the hieroglyphic, and pasting it upon the letter, in hopes that the resident postmaster may be familiar with the man and his manner of scrawling his name.

This topic may seem of little interest; but the great school of young people who read the *Ledger* will, we hope, form a habit of accurate writing in all business matters.

SUNDAY TALK ABOUT A SUNDAY WALK.

"For of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

So the dear Saviour said. So I thought, as two little creatures stood before me with flossy locks, and blue morning-glories between their fingers, which were to be my perquisites. No dew upon a half-opened rose bud, not the first smile upon your own first baby's lips, could breathe more purely of Heaven than the presence of these little ones.

"Going to walk this pleasant morning?" said I, to the younger of the twain.

"We don't walk Thundays," replied the little lisper, with a decorous twitch of her dress, as she cast down her long eyelashes and smoothed a wrinkle in her Sunday dress.

Not walk Sundays? I was about to exclaim. Why, Sunday seems to me a very good day on which to walk. Sunday is everywhere. It's in that pretty flower in your hand which God painted so beautiful a blue. It's in that half-opened rose bud, so like yourself, made to blossom like a flower in God's garden. It's in that sparkling dew-drop hung on that blade of grass at your tiny foot. It's in that busy bee, come out to get the breakfast which God cooked for him on Sunday morning. It's even in your little Kitty, whom God don't expect to fold her paws and keep from running up a tree because it's Sunday. It's in the little colt that chases round the meadow, and sniffs in the fresh Sunday air without knowing it's wicked.

Not walk on Sunday? Sunday is in pleasant words. Sunday is in kind hearts and deeds. Sunday is in happy smiles, to make each other's hearts glad. Sunday is every day, when we love Him and everything He has made. Sunday is in those little eyes of yours, which God don't take the merry twinkle out of because it's Sunday. It will be no more Sunday, my darlings, when you sing with the angels, than when you chase after your Kitty to make the dumb little creature happy to-day.

To all who read this I would say: These are the thoughts I was about to utter; but did not, remembering that there are very good, conscientious people, who, unlike me, do not walk on Sunday. FANNY FERN.

Setting a Watch by a Barometer.

[From the New Bedford Mercury.]

A gentleman walked into the office of Smith, Lewis & Carpenter, at Vineyard Grove, the other day, and looking up at the barometer which hung on the wall, said, "I guess that's right; it's about six o'clock," and proceeded to set the hands of his watch to correspond with the position of the index of the barometer. He left the office totally unconscious that he had regulated his time-piece by the weather.

DEAD AND ALIVE.

BY JUDGE CLARK.

When Edgar Carroll and Irene Hayne plighted over again their troth with the solemn earnestness of lovers in the hour of parting, either would have staked existence on the other's truth.

The parting might be a long one. Edgar Carroll was going forth to "seek his fortune," and how long he might be finding it, time alone could tell. That he would one day find it, and return with the right openly to claim of the rich merchant his daughter's hand, he was too sanguine a lover to doubt.

For three years Edgar's letters came, bearing messages of love which seemed so real that Irene could almost fancy them uttered at her side, instead of coming from the other side of the world. At last one came that set her heart in a flutter, and caused a brighter light to sparkle in her eyes. It spoke of her lover's speedy return. Success had crowned his efforts, and at last he might stand, without blushing, in the presence of proud old Walter Hayne, and speak his mind freely.

Then there was an interval in which no letters came. This silence Irene, for a time, interpreted as the best of news. It implied that Edgar was on his way. And she began to count the weeks, and then the days—how long they seemed!—which must yet elapse before his coming.

Months passed, and still no tidings. Irene's letters remained unanswered. A prey to the worst forebodings, she tried, in the presence of others, to suppress all outward signs of her trouble, for she had never disclosed the secret of her love save to its object.

At last she could not even hope. Her lover must be dead; she could never believe him faithless. Still she struggled bravely, that the world might not know her sorrow. Her cheek grew paler and her step less elastic, and anxious friends began to shake their heads and hint of failing health. Her father's fears became alarmed. Physicians counselled travel and change of air. The experiment was tried, but without perceptible benefit. When she returned, her face wore a more serene expression, but the grief of which time had only blunted the edge still rankled within.

During the absence of Mr. Hayne and his daughter, a stranger had taken up his abode in the place of their residence.

Who or what Mr. Newcome was, or whence he came, nobody pretended to know; yet every man, woman and child was ready to vouch for his respectability. He was a bachelor and lived alone, rarely appearing in society, yet often enough to avoid the appearance of shunning it. His dress and style of living denoted wealth. His age was that at which men retain the freshness of youth without its frivolity. His face was handsome and intellectual. Some set him down for a student; some for an amateur artist; the young ladies generally for a poet; and all for a gentleman of cultivated manners and independent fortune.

Before Irene's return, Mr. Newcome had been noted, in his association with ladies, for marked politeness toward all, rather than particular attention to any. But there was something so queenly in the pale-faced beauty's dark melancholy eyes that their first glance peculiarly attracted him.

His habits of seclusion were soon measureably abandoned. He was constantly meeting Irene—first by seeming accident at the houses of such friends as she was accustomed to visit, then by direct calls upon herself, approved by her father, into whose good graces the fascinating stranger had spared no pains to make his way.

At one of these interviews the conversation turned upon Australia, where Mr. Newcome had spent some years. In the course of it, he mentioned a name which caused Irene to start.

"Edgar—Edgar Carroll! you knew him then?" she managed to say, with effort.

"He was my most intimate friend," replied Mr. Newcome with seeming carelessness, at the same time scanning keenly her agitated face—"that is, until he married."

"Married!" The word died upon her lips.

"It was considered a good match, I believe," Mr. Newcome added, pretending not to notice the effect of his words. "The lady was a wealthy colonist's daughter—an only child, and all that."

The blow fell with cruel force. For a moment Irene's faculties were stunned. She had mourned her lover as dead. She had now a greater grief to bear; he had proved false.

Recovering her self-possession by an incredible effort, Irene's composure, during the rest of the conversation, almost convinced Mr. Newcome, observant as he was, that his first conclusion, drawn from the effect produced by Edgar Carroll's name, had been too hasty.

Some months later, when Irene's father hinted that Mr. Newcome had asked permission to become her suitor, and that his own sanction had been already given, he was agreeably surprised at the manner in which the announcement was received. True, he had coupled it with a further hint that the critical condition of his own business affairs made it necessary that he should soon raise a much larger sum of money than his present resources enabled him to command; and though he did *not* hint that, with the wealthy Mr. Newcome for a son-in-law, a way of escape might be opened from his embarrassment, Irene's quick perception caught his meaning. By sacrificing herself she could serve her father, and, for herself, what did it matter now?

Mr. Newcome's suit was warmly pressed, and met a favorable answer. He was urgent that Irene should name an early day for their union, and she did not oppose his wishes.

* * * * * * * * * *

It was the evening before the wedding-day, and Mr. Newcome had called to pay his last visit as a wooer.

The apathy of Irene's reception was more than counterbalanced by the warmth of that extended by her father, and Mr. Newcome was well satisfied. He was not an exacting lover, and, we may as well confess it, had little schemes of his own in this marriage. He knew nothing of Mr. Hayne's difficulties, and was quite as quick to appreciate the advantages of having that gentleman for a father-in-law, as the latter had been to perceive the benefits likely to flow from the same relationship.

Irene's face was paler than usual, and her manner more disturbed; but her father was in too high spirits, and Mr. Newcome too polite, to notice the change. The pleasant manner in which these gentlemen got on together, augured well for the future in the mind of each. They were in the midst of an agreeable chat when a visitor was announced, who insisted on seeing Mr. Hayne alone.

To the latter's answer that he was engaged, and must postpone the interview to some more convenient time, the servant brought for reply that the person refused to be sent away, declaring that his business was too pressing to be deferred.

In no gracious mood Mr. Hayne passed into an adjacent apartment, whence loud and excited voices were soon heard.

At the sound of one of them, both Irene and Mr. Newcome started to their feet.

"So the villain is here!" exclaimed Edgar Carroll, thrusting open the door, and advancing in the threatening manner of one about to spring upon and throttle his deadliest enemy. But Irene's white face met his angry gaze, and he stood motionless.

"The relationship soon to exist between that gentleman and myself," interposed Mr. Hayne, "makes it my duty to see that he is not insulted under my roof."

"And it is that that relationship may be entered into with full knowledge of the truth, that I have come to unmask a villain!" Edgar retorted.

Newcome, for the moment, had believed himself in personal peril, and had shrunk back coweringly; but a moment's reflection assured him that, in the presence of Mr. Hayne and his daughter, he had no cause for fear.

"My character, I trust, is proof against any calumnies malice may bring against it," he said, with his usual coolness. "If this person has aught whereof to accuse me, let him speak."

"It is for that I am here," replied Edgar, "and a few words will suffice.

"In the distant land to which we had both gone in quest of gold, this man and myself became friends. We shared the same tent, and had no secrets from each other. In treasure seeking I proved the more fortunate of the two, and my gains had already reached the point I had proposed they should attain, when my friend suggested a visit to some unexplored islands, of which he pretended to have heard rumors, and of whose wealth we might become the sole possessors. Though satisfied with my present acquisitions, and impatient of the delay which would result to certain plans of my own, whose accomplishment I had long looked forward to, I acceded to his wishes, hoping, for his sake rather than mine, that fortune might favor the enterprise.

"We fitted out a small vessel, and after a voyage of several days anchored off a thickly wooded island. Leaving the crew on board, my friend and myself went ashore and began our search. In a secluded spot I was felled to the earth by a blow from behind, and left for dead.

"My treacherous friend made haste back to the vessel, reported that we had been attacked by savages, by whom I had been slain, and ordered an immediate return to the port whence we had sailed.

"On regaining consciousness, I found myself alone. I ran to the shore, but the vessel was no longer in sight. How I lived for months on that island, whose sole inhabitant I was; how I found gold there—gold in quantities exceeding my most extravagant dreams, and how I would have given it all for the sight of a human face, I need not stop to tell.

"One day I descried a sail in the distance. The sight made me wild with joy. I shouted and signalled, and by every means in my power sought to make my presence known. But still the ship held her course. Frantic with despair, I rushed into the waves, determined to swim toward her while strength held out, when at length she shortened sail, and I saw a boat lowered from her side. With what heartfelt joy I fell upon the neck of the first rough sailor that sprang ashore, and kissed his weather-beaten cheek!

"I conducted my deliverers to the treasure I had found. There was enough for us all. I returned to find myself robbed of my precious gains, whose place of concealment was known only to myself and him who had sought my life to get possession of them. But the loss I regarded as a trifle. I was now the possessor of treble the amount. You might have been a richer man by honest means, James Newcome, than theft and attempted murder made you."

"These new Adventures of Robinson Crusoe," sneered Mr. Newcome, "will perhaps require some voucher for their truth."

"*I* will vouch for it," said Irene proudly, "as I will for your falsehood in stating that Edgar Carroll"—taking his hand—"had broken faith with me by becoming the husband of another.

"Yes, Edgar," she continued, "he told me that, and it was only then, and to obey a father's wishes, that I consented to the crime of bestowing my hand without my heart."

"Wretch!" cried Edgar, "you demand proof of what I charge. I have not come without it. I have with me one of the crew who accompanied us to the island, and who heard the lie you told to account for my disappearance. The laws cannot here call you to account for a crime committed in another country, though they might compel you to disgorge its fruits. Keep them, but on one condition—never again offend her sight or mine by your hated presence!"

The condition was accepted, and faithfully kept.

Irene Carroll is a happy wife now, and never happier than when listening to a chapter from the adventures of her own Robinson Crusoe.

Suits for Breach of Promise of Marriage.

As a general thing, juries are very unsparing toward the defendant in suits for breach of promise of marriage. They require very little evidence to establish the promise, while nothing but the most conclusive proof will satisfy them that the contract—made either expressly or by implication—has subsequently been relinquished. A case in point is that of White against Mansfield, tried not long since in London.

> "It was not contended that there had not been an engagement, and it was proved that the defendant was married to an old acquaintance this year, but the defendant said that he and the plaintiff had agreed, in May, 1870, to release each other from the engagement. In support of this he produced a letter from the plaintiff to him, partly burnt, in which she said that for the future they must be friends, and nothing more. He swore that she read this letter to him, and then gave it to him, with the remark that there could be no mistake as to their intentions, and that while he was reading it over, she snatched it out of his hand and threw it on the fire, but that he picked it up and kept it. On the other hand, the plaintiff swore that she had heard of the defendant walking out with the person he has since married, and, being annoyed, wrote the letter with the intention of sending it to the defendant, but that on the defendant coming to see her, she asked him whether he had walked out with her rival, and on his declaring that he had never done so, she believed him, and throwing the letter in the fire, forgave him. No communication passed between the plaintiff and defendant after this incident, in May, 1870, until the marriage of the defendant in 1872. The jury found for the plaintiff. Damages, £75."

Literally Blown to Atoms.

A man named Payne, at Rouseville, Pa., undertook to transport some nitro-glycerine in a tin can. He placed it behind the seat on a buckboard—a kind of long, country wagon—drawn by a pair of horses. The can exploded, with the following results, as related by the *Titusville Herald*:

> "Mr. Payne's body was simultaneously scattered over an area of about twelve acres, the buckboard was literally torn into splinters, but strange to say, the horses were not killed, but ran away badly singed, and wounded in the haunches. The explosion was distinctly heard four miles off. What was found would not fill half a bushel measure. The right hand was found at a distance of 360 feet, and the other parts at various distances and widely scattered. His watch was picked up near the right hand, badly damaged; his pocket-book was found entire with its contents, but his account-book was torn to shreds."

Temperance Reformers Wanted in England.

The London *Times*, in view of the great increase of drinking in England, exclaims:

> "Among all the writers, all the talkers, all the preachers, all the workers, all the names we see daily blazoned in the roll of English fame, are there none that will set about to abate this nuisance and scandal—our national drunkenness?"

Opium-Eating Women.

[From the Vicksburg (Pa.) Herald.]

What alcohol does for men, opium is doing for women. The Bureau of Statistics reports three hundred and fifteen thousand one hundred pounds of prepared opium as being imported into this country during the year 1871, to supply the demand of the unfortunate victims.

Death from a Bite Eighteen Years Ago.

[From the Carthage (Ill.) Republican.]

A farmer died in the western part of Peoria county, on the 28th, of hydrophobia. He was bitten eighteen years ago, and it was thought that the late hot weather brought on the attack. His convulsions were terrible, and created much sorrow in the vicinity.

SUMMER NOON BY THE SEA.

BY FRANK J. OTTARSON.

How quiet sleeps the silver wave
  On old Atlantic's snowy strand,
As if the waters loved to lave
  The marge of Freedom's chosen land;
A swell as gentle as the breast
  Of Innocence in dreams of love,
All else is full and perfect rest,
  As moveless as the blue above.

There 's not a breath, there 's not a sound,
  To fan the brow or wake the ear;
The aspen leaf repose has found,
  For Silence waves her sceptre here;
'Tis Nature's sacred hour of prayer,
  And glassy wave and emerald sod
Send upward through the pulseless air
  The offering of their praise to God.

The wild bird's song has waned away,
  And died adown the shady dell,
As if it shunned the garish day,
  And longed to bid the sun farewell;
There 's not a cloud in all the air
  To break the shoreless sea of space,
One vault of blue is bending there,
  The boundless home of nothingness.

The flaming sunbeams blight the gaze,
  As, falling like a fiery robe,
They mingle in a mystic maze
  And dance and shimmer o'er the globe
The eyelids droop, the doors of thought
  Are closed, and thought itself is still;
The failing mind, with toil o'erwrought,
  No more obeys the tyrant will.

O, sweet repose! The care-worn soul,
  Relieved a while of thoughts of earth,
Wings upward to its final goal,
  And lingers near its place of birth.
Here let me pass the sultry day,
  With none but Peace and Nature near,
And dream till Luna's bright'ning ray
  Illumes the orient hemisphere;

Till star-beams, falling one by one,
  Their soft and tranquil light unfold,
And mingling with the setting sun,
  Seem liquid silver blent with gold;
Till zephyr pinions fan the sea,
  In amorous dalliance with its wave,
And night's own bird his plaintive key
  Attunes above the day-god's grave.

THE BLACK DOCTOR;

OR, THE

Prophecy of the Voodoo King.

AN HISTORICAL TALE OF THE SPANISH RULE IN LOUISIANA.

By WILLIAM HENRY PECK,
Professor of History in the University of the State of Louisiana.

CHAPTER XXX.

ADRASTE SCIPIAN AND MADAME VARLVILLE.

Prior to the recovery of Madame Varlville, and all during his attendance upon her case, Adraste Scipian was not able to obtain direct speech with Mercita, nor even to examine her features closely.

But as at that time, as we have stated, he had no suspicion that she was not a negress, and as his chief purpose was to restore Madame Varlville to health, and thereby win the gratitude, respect and confidence of that lady, he made no resolute effort to become intimate with the supposed negress.

Even had he done so he would have failed, because of that which we have mentioned—the instinctive dread and loathing held by Mercita toward him.

And during the five days' illness and insensibility of Madame Varlville, Perez was able to glean, by means of his overhearing at times the conversations of the two Russians, only this:

That it was the purpose of Adraste Scipian, after he should have cured Madame Varlville, to inform her that she had been poisoned, and that Mercita was the poisoner.

What more the Russians purposed Perez failed to discover.

We now return to the interview between Madame Varlville and Adraste Scipian, which we turned from just after the latter had told the former that the honor of her own family demanded that the facts concerning the poisoning should not be made public.

"*Grand Ciel!* It is as I suspected!" was the remark of Madame Varlville, in moaning and mournful reply to that of Adraste Scipian. "It is the honor of my own family which demands secrecy in this terrible affair!"

"See—Madame has already had cause to suspect," said Scipian, bowing nearly to the floor. "May I, a poor black man, though I am also the preserver of Madame's life—may I ask Madame if that which she has just intimated she suspected, does not point at one of her grandsons?"

Madame Varlville shuddered, and replied faintly:

"Yes."

"At both, Madame?"

"No—at one."

"At which one, Madame?"

"You know, doubtless, as well as I do, Adraste Scipian. At Leon de Vargas."

"Madame is wrong."

"What! you would accuse Adrian Dudley!"

"No, Madame—not directly."

"Speak! What mean you by not directly?"

"Ah, Madame, the young gentlemen are in their own hearts as innocent in this matter as I am. Let me explain this sad affair."

The Voodoo doctor then, by a specious and artfully woven story, made it appear that Mercita poisoned the confection which had so nearly proved fatal to Madame Varlville, and that she had aimed only at the life of Leon de Vargas, whom she had sought to destroy on account of his enmity to her and Adrian Dudley. He also impressed Madame Varlville with the conviction that her best course would be to sell Mercita to some one going to Cuba, and suggested Père Dominique as one who would perhaps be willing to purchase her. Still, Madame Varlville hesitated to take such a decisive step, as it was hard to give up all her faith in Mercita, and she finally said:

"You will return to-morrow morning at ten o'clock, Adraste Scipian, still as my medical attendant," commanded Madame Varlville. "I shall treat Mercita as if I had heard nothing, and suspected nothing. Only to Adrian will I speak of what you have said."

Adraste Scipian was compelled to depart without further advance in his plot to effect the immediate sale of Mercita.

All had not progressed as he hoped when he first entered the Varlville mansion on the night of the first of May. Then he expected to see Mercita accused of the poisoning by Leon de Vargas, and that by threats of revealing the agency of the latter in the crime, he should force him to send Mercita immediately into confinement; and from this confinement Père Dominique was to instantly effect her release, and take her secretly to the hut in the swamp, where the supposed negress would be wholly at their mercy.

But as Leon was absent, and Adrian Dudley also, on that night, Adraste Scipian changed his plan of attacking Mercita, and resolved to first restore Madame Varlville to health, gain her confidence, and then influence her to sell the supposed negress.

Even after recognizing, or being sure that he had recognized the object of his pursuit, "The Living Cross of Saint Andrew," in Mercita, he adhered to his latter plan, hoping to persuade Madame Varlville to consent to an immediate secret sale of the disguised woman—a sale which, of course, could only be completed by a sudden seizure of the woman, by Madame Varlville's consent—in brief, a legal kidnapping.

In truth, now that he was convinced that the supposed negress was indeed the fugitive princess whose destruction was demanded by Empress Catherine II. of Russia, Don Sebastian, or Adraste Scipian, as for the present we will call the pretended Voodoo doctor, saw no means by which he could obtain possession of Mercita except by succeeding in his last plan—that is, by persuading Madame Varlville to consent to a secret and kidnapping sale of the accused woman.

In his character of Voodoo doctor he did not dare to oppose Madame Varlville's intention to confer with her grandson, Adrian Dudley.

He hastened to confer with Père Dominique, that is, the Russian known to the reader so far as Ivan.

The house hired by the latter was small, isolated, and in a squalid suburb of the city.

The interview of Adraste Scipian with which this story opened, had consumed several hours. It was in the middle of the afternoon before the two Russians met in one of the three rooms of the hired house.

Ivan, in the garb of a monk, was seated at a table reading, as Adraste Scipian entered the room.

"We are alone?" asked the latter, as Ivan looked up.

"The mulatto Joseph is lying on the floor asleep, as you see," replied Ivan, pointing at the recumbent form of the disguised Perez. "Joseph! Joseph!"

But the recumbent form remained as motionless as a log, except that the broad breast of the prostrate man, as he lay on his back, rose and fell with the long and regular breathing of a deep sleeper.

"He is asleep like a hog in the sunshine," said Ivan. "See, the sun shines squarely on his head and face; such sleeping would kill a white man with sun-stroke. He does not mind that glare as much as you or I would the gleaming of the moon. Yet he will awake as stupid as a bear that has been clubbed on the head. Joseph! Joseph!"

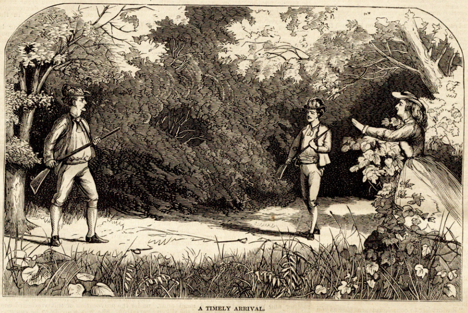
"Let him sleep; and if he was awake, he does not understand Russian," said Adraste Scipian, sitting down. "I have great tidings. I am impatient to tell them."

"Diablos!" thought the wily Perez, on the floor. "I am also impatient to hear something. It is true, I have been lying here four hours. Every bone and muscle in my body is on the rack. A million maledictions on these Russians!"

"Ivan, I have conversed a long time with Madame Varlville," began Adraste Scipian.

"Ah! She is able to converse?"

"Yes. She is also able to sit up. I think that I have convinced her that the negress Mercita was the poisoner," replied the other, who then related succinctly all that had been said by himself and Madame Varlville.



A TIMELY ARRIVAL.

He was nearly an hour in narrating his account of the interview. Ivan listened attentively, occasionally asking a pertinent question.

"All depends now upon the conclusion at which Madame Varlville may arrive, after her consultation with her grandson, Adrian Dudley," at length remarked Ivan, who was not yet informed of the identity of Mercita.

"All. But I think the young man will favor the plan of secretly selling the negress to some one who will carry her from the country, as soon as it can possibly be done," replied Adraste Scipian.

"In that case we must have a purchaser ready, your Highness. Myself, in some suitable character—that of Père Dominique, for instance," said Ivan, smiling. "In fact, the very thing! You might to-morrow—in case all goes well—mention to Madame Varlville that Père Dominique, connected with a convent in Cuba, could take the negress there, and immure her for life as a punishment, and as a fit place wherein she should be led to repent of her sins. Obtain for Père Dominique a private interview with the Madame, and I doubt not that I, after your Highness' preparation of the affair, shall persuade her to place the negress in my care, and in the secret and forcible manner we desire. But, your Highness, all may be labor lost. What if, after all our trouble, waste of time and expense, we find that the negress can give us, even if she would, little or no information of 'The Cross?'"

"Mercita is not a negress," said Adraste Scipian.

"Ah!" ejaculated Ivan, staring at the other.

"To think that neither of us have ever even suspected that Mercita might be a white woman, Count!"

"Indeed! A white woman! You have discovered that she is a white woman? Or did Madame Varlville tell you that?"

"Madame Varlville does not, I imagine, suspect that Mercita is not a negress. During all this time, since my first entrance into the Varlville Mansion, I did not gain, or even seek a close view of Mercita's face. To-day I did. I instantly detected that the pretended negress was a white woman."

"Indeed," said Ivan.

"Diablos!" thought the recumbent and listening Perez. "I did not suspect that."

"And I recognized that this pretended negress was a firm friend of 'The Cross,'" continued Adraste Scipian, delighted in revealing his discovery by bits.

"Ha! This is famous fortune at last," said Ivan, rubbing his hands.

"'The Cross' herself, by heaven!" exclaimed Adraste Scipian, clapping his hands.

"No!" cried Ivan, springing to his feet, and trembling with surprise.

"Yes! A thousand times yes! This pretended negress, this woman Mercita, is 'The Cross' herself—is of course the writer of that 'Lord's Prayer' in four languages, and therefore 'Isadora Raymundo.' Do you not perceive now how it was done? As the unknown 'Isadora Raymundo,' she obtained the official signature of the Captain-General of Cuba, twelve years ago. As the unknown 'Isadora Raymundo,' she compelled that rascal Sancho Perez to serve her, and to sell her as Mercita the negress to Madame Varlville. And as Angelique, whom old Juan saw taken from the chest by Paul Smolenski, she must have obtained that knowledge of the crimes of Sancho Perez which enabled her to force him to obey the unknown 'Isadora Raymundo.'"

"Diablos!" thought the startled Perez, unable to doubt the assertions of the Russian any longer. "Then the one who crushed me, who made me the hideous convict of the accursed mines, is a woman, and that woman is the Angelique I adore!"

And here a great groan, more of a moan than a groan, burst from the huge and vitriol-blasted lips of the pretended mulatto.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE SPONGE OF ADRASTE SCIPIAN.

"Ha! Are you awake there, Joseph?" demanded Ivan, turning quickly toward the prostrate form, and drawing a pistol. "I think it may be possible that you are also a pretended black! Eh?"

"I have long suspected that!" exclaimed Adraste Scipian, also drawing a pistol. "We must make sure of such a spy. We must kill him at once! It is easily and safely done here in this lonely house. Let us fire together, Ivan. At the word three. Now then—one! two! Bah! He is really asleep," said Adraste Scipian, as the pretended mulatto remained motionless. "Were he awake, some quiver of his nerves would have betrayed him. He groaned in his sleep. No wonder, with that flame of sunshine scorching his hideous face."

"Your Highness said just now," remarked Ivan, with an uneasy glance toward Perez, "that you had long suspected that this fellow was a pretended mulatto. Was the remark only at random, and to try his nerves?"

"A random remark, Ivan. No more."

"I am nevertheless startled," said Ivan, "especially since you have discovered that another has for twelve years passed unsuspected of being a negress. This fellow sleeps; I have no doubt of that, and we can easily determine whether he is a mulatto or not."

Ivan pointed at the gaunt and muscular right arm of Perez, bare nearly to the shoulder, and extended on the floor.

"That is true," said Adraste Scipian. "If the rascal's skin is dyed, I have something here which will take the stain off without even waking him."

"Diablos! A myriad maledictions on these suspicious Russians! Now am I lost if my dye is cleansed off by his acid!"

Adraste Scipian, having carefully prepared a piece of sponge, drew it slowly and firmly several times up and down the bare arm of the pretended mulatto.

"Ha!" suddenly ejaculated Ivan, who was looking on anxiously.

"Ha!" ejaculated he who was sponging the arm of Perez.

"Caramba!" thought the latter. "I am lost—unless they will receive me as an ally."

"He is a white man," said Ivan.

"That is true," said Adraste Scipian, rising from his kneeling posture. "But he sleeps."

"True, or he would have tried in some way to evade this examination. He must die, your Highness, for he may be a spy upon us, and may have discovered something."

"Stop! Do not stab him as he sleeps! Let us wake him, and question him."

"But first let us take care that he shall make no fight for his life, if his death shall be necessary," said Ivan, securing Perez's knife; and in another moment he had lifted the head of the pretended sleeper and passed a stout cord around his neck.

This cord, having one end noosed around the neck of Perez, was then made fast to a beam overhead.

Perez made not the slightest resistance, nor gave the slightest intimation that he was awake.

"If I do that," he thought, "Ivan's dagger will be in my heart before I can speak. If I get a chance to speak I may save my life—and the life of Angelique!"

"Ha! rascal! you who call yourself Joseph—you who called yourself Raymundo in Havana—we shall soon see what this disguise means," said Ivan. "Look out of the window on the other side, your Highness, while I look out on this. We must take care not to be interrupted. Wait; I will make the door fast. So. Now awake the rascal."

Adraste Scipian saturated a piece of sponge with some liquid, and pressed it upon the nostril-less nose of Perez.

Perez was seized with a fit of sneezing which he could not resist, and which would have aroused him had he been at his last gasp.

He sneezed several times, and raising himself on an elbow, stared in a stupid way around, while with one hand he began to fumble at the rope around his neck.

"Hands off the rope!" commanded Ivan, as he and Adraste Scipian stood near the prostrate man, with their daggers and pistols drawn.

"Why, masters! What does this mean? What have I done?" began Perez, as if greatly bewildered.

"It means," replied Adraste Scipian, coldly and sternly, "that you are an impostor. You are a white man in disguise. Look at your arm."

Perez, simulating confusion, surprise and despair, all at once, cast his eyes upon the sponged arm, uttered a cry of woe, and sank back upon the floor, saying in a gloomy voice:

"I am discovered!"

"Yes—at least that you are a white man. But your name?—your reason for deceiving us?" demanded Scipian.

"I am thus disguised, Senors," said Perez in Spanish, and in that deep, rolling, imposing voice that was peculiarly his own, and totally unlike the reedy, wiry, squeaking tones of his assumed character, "and I am thus mutilated, thus horribly disfigured, because I am Sancho Perez, who was destroyed by the hate of Isadora Raymundo."

"Ha! you are Captain Sancho Perez? Can it be true?" exclaimed the Russians, exchanging glances of amazement, and then staring at the convict.

"Senor Ivan, and I know you by no other name," said Perez, "you and the Jew Samuels visited me in my dungeon in the Moro Castle, some twelve years ago. You wished me to tell you all I knew of the unknown Isadora Raymundo, and of the note for twelve thousand reals, No. 13,721. Isadora Raymundo—I know not whether the owner of that name is a man or a woman—had ruined me. I was sentenced to the mines for life. I knew that I should sometime escape—if not in a year, perhaps in ten; if not in ten, perhaps in twenty—at least, sometime ere I should die. I felt that I was certain of it. Then, being free, I meant to avenge myself with my own hands, these!" he said, with all his formidable fierceness, and grappling toward the Russians with his bony outspread hands.

Perez continued with admirably simulated ferocity to recount his wrongs, stated frankly how, with the aid of Gomaza the pawnbroker, he had imposed himself on Don Sebastian as a mulatto and a Voodoo doctor, all for the purpose, as he alleged, of getting a chance to avenge himself on Isadora Raymundo. His manner was so fierce, and his thirst for vengeance apparently so genuine, that the Russians were completely deceived.

They did not suspect that Perez had learned that Isadora Raymundo was Mercita, that Mercita was his adored Angelique; and that he now regarded them, and not Isadora Raymundo, as the cause of all his misfortunes.

"Angelique," thought Perez, "did not attack me because she was my enemy. In escaping from these Russians, she was forced to crush me. She did not know that I loved her. I was a stranger to her. She was obliged to crush me to save her own life. I cannot blame her. She was but the accidental cause of my sufferings. These Russians and their Empress are the true cause of all that I have suffered. I love Angelique, whom they seek to destroy. I will destroy them to save Angelique, and the dagger of Sancho Perez may even reach the heart of that tigress Empress of Russia who began her reign by murdering her husband, Peter III."

And this was the man whom the Russians were about to take into their confidence.

The Russians consulted together for some time, and then Adraste Scipian said to Perez:

"Had you made yourself known to us in Havana we would not have betrayed you to the police. We should have gladly welcomed your aid. We do not doubt that you will be true to us, for we are eager for the same end—to destroy the person we call Isadora Raymundo. Had you intended to betray us, or in any way to thwart our purpose, you have had many chances to do so. A line from you to Madame Varlville would have ruined our designs, and perhaps ourselves. You say you do not know why we wish to destroy Isadora Raymundo, and we believe you; for though you have admitted that you understood Russian a little, we have been so careful in conversing of the affair, that though you had been a native Russian you could not have penetrated our reasons for desiring to destroy that person. It is not your affair. We, perhaps, have as many reasons to wish that person's destruction as you have. You would not be satisfied simply to kill that person?"

"No, Senor. Isadora Raymundo must, to gratify my revenge, suffer as I have suffered. Diablos! I desire to torture Isadora Raymundo with these hands!" exclaimed Perez ferociously, and in his terribly formidable way.

"But if Isadora Raymundo be a woman?"

"Good! Her capability to suffer will be greater than that of a man. Man, woman, or devil, Isadora Raymundo destroyed the body and soul of Sancho Perez! Give me vengeance upon Isadora Raymundo, and then I care not if I die."

"You shall have your desire. You can obtain it only by being true to us, and by obeying us. Your life is in our hands—"

"My life! That for the life of Sancho Perez, if he cannot obtain vengeance upon Isadora Raymundo!" exclaimed Perez, spitting in the air. "True to you! Diablos! have I not been your slave—sold myself to you only to serve you in your desire to destroy Isadora Raymundo?"

"True, and therefore we will continue to trust you," said Ivan, as he removed the rope from the convict's neck.

"Yes, we will trust you," remarked Adraste Scipian gravely. "Isadora Raymundo is a woman, as you may have inferred from such scraps of our conversation as you may have overheard."

"Senor, I can scarcely believe that, even now when I hear you assert it. But it does not decrease my desire for vengeance. Diablos! I never injured her."

"Isadora Raymundo is a woman, and were she in Russia, and under the influence of the enemies of the Empress of Russia, she might some day be Empress of Russia herself. Catherine II. will well reward all who aid in removing forever this dangerous rival. It is for that great reward that we are striving. You too, in Russia, may become great and rich and favored."

"That for all greatness and all wealth!" exclaimed Perez, again spitting in the air. "Give me only vengeance upon Isadora Raymundo—upon the one who made me what I now am."

The two Russians exchanged glances of great satisfaction at this reply of the convict, who had uttered it furiously, and thrown himself upon the floor, which he beat with his fists, in pretended fury.

"Patience," said Adraste Scipian. "To-morrow, or at most a few days, may place your enemy in our hands. She has, or had a child. We do not know whether that child was a boy or a girl. We do not know whether that child is dead or living. When Isadora Raymundo is in our power it may be difficult to force her to tell the truth concerning that child. To you, Sancho Perez, we shall give the task of torturing the secret from her."

"Bravo! I desire such vengeance as that, if Isadora Raymundo is a woman!"

"You shall have it. For the present continue to be Joseph the Voodoo doctor. Replace the dye you use, and go to the hut in the swamp. I will see you there to-morrow. There is no danger of the return of Leon de Vargas yet?"

"No, Senor. He is in Mobile."

"There was a report in the Varlville mansion this morning that he had returned."

"It was false. Leon de Vargas will not return until he hears from me, Senor."

"It is well. Make known to Juan that you are Sancho Perez, and we shall have no fear of his making a mistake."

Perez departed, leaving the Russians to continue their conference unheard by him.

He had heard enough. Mercita was no longer a negress whom he desired to torture into revelations concerning "Isadora Raymundo." Mercita was not "Isadora Raymundo" to him. Mercita, to Sancho Perez, was now his adored Angelique. To him the Russians were now his hated "Isadora Raymundo."

CHAPTER XXXII.

SCIPIAN AGAIN SEES MADAME VARLVILLE.

On the day subsequent to the events narrated in the preceding chapter, Adraste Scipian entered the Varlville mansion at the appointed hour, and was soon in the white room in the presence of Madame Varlville and Adrian Dudley.

Madame Varlville was seated in her great chair, and near her stood Adrian Dudley.

Their features were grave and sad.

Scipian bowed, and awaited speech from either.

"Adraste Scipian," said Madame Varlville, "I have repeated to Monsieur Dudley all that you said to me yesterday. He has told me something in return which leads me to fear that your confident suspicions and assertions are too true."

"Ah, Madame! Ah, Monsieur!" and Adraste Scipian bowed once to each.

"Though Monsieur Dudley has not seen Mercita go secretly from this mansion for nearly a year, he has seen her do so in former years, and he detected her near the old hut in the swamp. That was three years ago. She begged Monsieur Dudley to tell no one—satisfied him with some plausible excuse. This proves that Mercita is at least capable of acting clandestinely. Were I assured that Mercita is the woman who recently communicated with your comrades of the hut, and conversed with them of poison, of course I could no longer doubt that your accusation and reasoning in the matter is perfectly correct. How am I to be assured of that? If the two blacks are brought to this house to identify her, scandal may arise, as you said yesterday. Let me also state that I have learned that Mercita was weeping and moaning a great deal in her own room last night, for I deemed it well that Monsieur Dudley should watch her."

"Yes," said Adrian, in a sad voice, "at your command, mother, I played the part of a spy and eavesdropper."

"My son, one should have no sentimental scruples when a crime has been committed, and the criminal is suspected," remarked Madame Varlville gravely. "You obeyed me. You overheard her exclaim, 'She will trust me no more!' Therefore we must suspect her. It is a matter which I will not place before the judges. I have resolved to act thus, Adraste Scipian. To-morrow I think I shall be strong enough to visit the old hut, riding on my horse, which is very steady and gentle. There used to be a path through the swamp to the hut, along which an old hermit who used to live in the hut sometimes was wont to ride on his mule—"

"The same path, Madame, which I use with my gray mule," remarked Scipian, bowing.

"Ah? I did not know that. Well, I shall go by that path to the hut, and Mercita and Monsieur Dudley will go with me. We will then see if the two blacks, your comrades, recognize Mercita. Take care not to hint to them of my intended visit, or they may be on their guard. Mercita shall not be told whither we are going until we are well on the way. Monsieur Dudley or I will then tell her, and closely observe her actions, as we will also at the hut. If your comrades recognize her at the hut, Monsieur Dudley will instantly seize and bind her, and there, in or at the hut, we will try her. If I be convinced that she is guilty, she shall be confined in the hut until Monsieur Dudley shall have found some one who will take her to Cuba, to be sold there. The honorable name of Varlville must be protected from scandal. It must never be known that a poisoner has been at work in the Varlville Mansion. Your comrades or servants, or whatever those two blacks may be, will not dare speak of the matter; yet you must see that they both leave Louisiana as soon as possible, Adraste Scipian. The hut is upon land that belongs to my estate. After this affair is at an end, the hut shall be burnt. I will see that you shall have a dwelling of your own in the city."

"Thanks, Madame," said Adraste Scipian, bowing deeply. "To be protected and rewarded by so noble a lady is more than I deserve. I am, Madame, all the more grateful, as my present protector, Père Dominique, is about to return to Cuba. I may say, Madame, that did he know of this matter, he might take charge of Mercita, and place her for life in the convent of St. Anne in Cuba, where she could repent of her sins."

"Very true. Mercita is very proud and reserved, though her conduct has ever been quiet, obedient and gentle—so far as I know. If I be convinced of her guilt in this matter, I will send for Père Dominique, of whose pious and charitable character I have heard. I may place the matter before him, and ask his advice and aid. At any rate, whether Mercita be guilty or not, my faith in her is shaken. A slave who carries a concealed weapon is not to be trusted."

Madame Varlville could not doubt that the confections had been poisoned; yet she was not convinced that Mercita was the poisoner.

There was a horrible dread in the mind of the lady.

She feared the whole affair was a plot of Leon de Vargas.

After a little more conversation, Adraste Scipian was dismissed.

He at once hurried to confer with Ivan, in their dwelling in the suburbs.

Perez was also there, but as the Russians now believed him to be a most faithful ally and valuable accomplice, they did not hesitate to converse in his presence.

"All is as we could desire, Ivan," said Adraste Scipian, who then narrated what had passed between him and Madame Varlville.

"It could not have been more into our hands had we planned it ourselves," said Ivan, when he had heard all. "And now for your plans."

"Joseph and Juan are to recognize Mercita as the negress who asked them for poison," replied Adraste Scipian, as we continue to call the greater Russian. "Then Adrian Dudley, aided by Joseph and Juan, if their aid be needed, will seize and bind Mercita, and she will probably be secured in the hut, to be held there for that trial which Madame Varlville has in view. You will be concealed in the woods close at hand, not to appear unless I call for your aid. Madame Varlville shall see her suddenly fall ill, if she persists in questioning Mercita at once. I can manage that. It is probable that Mercita will defend herself with her tongue, if she has power of speech left her in her surprise. Should she in her terror declare her true name, Madame Varlville and Adrian Dudley may not set her down as mad, but listen to her. This we must avoid. Joseph and I must gag her the instant Adrian Dudley arrests her, or, as he probably will, command Joseph and Juan to seize her. I have advised Madame Varlville to have her gagged, if she be recognized by them as the poison seeker, and I will take care that Mercita shall not be able to utter a word for hours. Madame Varlville and Adrian Dudley—who have full confidence in me—will leave Mercita in my care at the hut, for the night. Joseph and Juan will state that, if time be given them, they will have another servant of the household, or of the Varlville plantations, at the hut on the next day, to confront Mercita, as a witness that she stole the vial. Madame and young Monsieur will then agree to defer the trial until Joseph shall go and find that pretended witness. And when Madame and Monsieur return on the next day, they will find the hut empty. You and I and old Juan and 'The Cross' will be gone—miles below on the river. You, Ivan, must at once secure that schooner of which you spoke yesterday. We will embark in that with our prize, whether she be dead or alive. See that our disguises as English traders are all ready. Joseph can take them to the hut, where we will put them on when sure of our prize. When she is our prisoner, we can soon learn whether her child is living or not, and if living, where."

More conversation concerning their intended movements followed after this between the two Russians, Perez of course taking some part in it, as the others now regarded him as a most valuable ally.

The Russians were ignorant of the fact that Perez had overheard that conversation which had passed between them on the preceding day, when he pretended to be asleep, and had informed him that Mercita was that "Isadora Raymundo" so hated by him, and even warned him not to harm her until they had first questioned her.

"When she is aboard our vessel, Joseph," said Adraste Scipian, who continued to call Perez Joseph, "we will resign her to your vengeance. Be careful not to permit her to suspect that you are Sancho Perez before we command you to make yourself known to her. Your revenge will be all the sweeter to you for the delay."

"Diablos! That is true!" replied Perez, his eyes gleaming with ferocious joy.

Having received his instructions as to how he and old Juan were to act, Perez departed for the hut.

"And do you really intend to resign the Princess to that ferocious brute?" asked Ivan, when Perez had left the house.

"Never. She may be fair and beautiful yet," replied Adraste Scipian. "Think you that I would resign her, whom once I passionately loved, to that hideous man tiger? My vengeance must first be gratified by her humiliation, Ivan. We must learn too, whether her child—who after her is the heir of Ivan Antonovitch—is still living. To torture her with terror, we will threaten to give her up to the vengeance of this horrible wretch whom she hurled remorselessly into the slavery of the mines. As for him, when we shall have no further use for him, he shall die."

Before the day was over, Ivan had purchased a schooner which had been for sale for several days, and hired a crew of ten or twelve men, all of whom were fellows of the basest character, and not likely to interfere with the plans of the two Russians.

A captain to command the crew, and to take charge of the vessel, was also hired; and after nightfall the craft dropped down two or three miles below the city, to a spot where the intended captive was to be taken aboard on the day after the morrow.

These preparations and others were made rapidly and with ease by Ivan, who used gold freely, and who was a man of vigorous energy in the service of the Empress of Russia.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SCIPIAN SEIZES HIS PREY.

On the day following the preparations made for her capture and destruction, Mercita was told by Madame Varlville to make ready to accompany her on a ride which she was about to take; and near the hour of nine in the morning, Madame Varlville, Adrian Dudley and Mercita set forth upon an expedition which was to end with something unsuspected by the latter.

Madame Varlville and Adrian had taken care not to alarm the suspicions of the pretended negress, by word or act.

Mercita, mounted on a mule, had no knowledge whither they were about to go, but supposed that her mistress was about to proceed upon one of those rides in which she sometimes indulged, to visit one of her plantations.

Adrian Dudley, well mounted, as was Madame Varlville, rode by the side of the latter, a little in advance of Mercita, for a mile or more, all proceeding at that slow pace which was adapted to the recent illness of Madame Varlville.

At length, however, the latter said to Mercita:

"It is a very beautiful day, and I wish to visit a place in the swamp—"

"In the swamp, Madame!"

"Why not? Monsieur Adrian tells me the road is good to where two or three strange negroes have made an abode for themselves in an old hut which stands upon my land. Were you ever there?"

Madame Varlville asked the question with keen abruptness, and with her powerful black eyes fixed upon the face of her servant.

"No, Madame," replied Mercita calmly, "not that I am aware. Madame does not mention any particular hut."

"Ah! But you have at some time visited some hut in the swamp?" asked Madame Varlville, with assumed carelessness.

"Adrian Dudley may have betrayed me," thought Mercita, "and I must be careful. Yes, Madame," she added aloud, "some years ago I did go on a ramble in the swamp, and I saw there a log hut in which lived an old man. The hut lies in this direction;" and here she pointed as she spoke.

"It is the same, I suppose. You have not been there recently?"

"No, Madame."

Madame Varlville rode on with Adrian.

"She does not deny that she has visited the hut, Adrian," she said to her grandson, and unheard by Mercita.

"She may suspect that I have told you that which I indiscreetly promised her I would never reveal, mother."

"That is possible. Her denial that she has recently visited the place was very firm. I fear she is innocent."

"Fear that she is innocent, mother!"

"*Grand Ciel!* that I must say that, my son. But rather would I find this woman guilty, than live on in dread of the guilt of Leon."

The two conversed until the path through the swamp became too narrow for them to ride abreast.

Then the party proceeded with Adrian in advance, until all debouched suddenly upon the cleared space before the hut.

The door of the hut was closed, and no one was visible.

"We will dismount," said Adrian, who then assisted Madame Varlville to alight.

Mercita sprang to the ground, as unsuspicious as ever [illegible] been there. She had never visited the place without having first seen a blue and red ribbon tied somewhere on the front fence of the Varlville Mansion. Fully a year had passed since she had seen one of these signals of her friend Paul Smolenski, and yet not a day had gone by for some months that had not seen her look eagerly every morning for the secret signal.

Adrian fastened the three animals to the rude horse-rack which had been made by Juan and Perez for the use of Adraste Scipian, and then said:

"Well, mother, no one seems to be here; but let us enter the hut."

He uttered these words very loud; and they were scarcely spoken when the door of the hut was thrown wide open, and Mercita beheld Juan, Perez and Adraste Scipian come out.

She did not know the two first. She shuddered at the sight of Adraste Scipian.

The latter bowed low to Madame Varlville and to Adrian.

To the amazement of Mercita, old Juan gave her a sly nod of recognition, and so did Perez, as if they desired to recognize her unseen by the others.

"Madame perceives. Monsieur perceives," said Adraste Scipian, bowing.

"Wait," said Madame Varlville, who had, as she supposed, detected a covert recognition. "Old man."

"At de sarbice ob de great lady," replied Juan, who had received his orders from his superiors.

"I saw you nod to this woman. Is she the negress who came here a few nights ago for something? Do not lie, old man."

"Nebber lied in all my life, mistress! Nebber! Dis colored hidalgo above dat low bizniss. She am de woman."

Mercita was now visibly, violently trembling. She had suddenly recognized in Juan the same old negro whom she had seen in the deserted house in Havana, twelve years before. She recognized his peculiar features and especially the great scar on his bald forehead—the same scar by which Perez had recognized him as the pretended Poncho on the quay in Havana.

"Ha! Mercita, have you ever seen this old man before?" demanded Adrian Dudley.

"She cannot speak for terror," said Madame Varlville.

"Since Madame knows all," remarked old Juan, "Mercita can't deny dat she hab a slight acquaintance wid' Juan Olio."

"And with Joseph, who used to belong to Captain Sancho Perez," said Adraste Scipian in Russian, and in his natural voice, a voice never heard by Madame Varlville until that moment.

Mercita, already terrified by recognizing Juan, now hearing the name of Sancho Perez uttered in a voice which she recognized as that of the man who years before had thrust his love upon her, and pursued her with terrible hate because she rejected that love, now sank upon her knees, raised her hands and face toward Heaven, and exclaimed:

"Oh, God! I am lost! He has discovered all!"

"Arrest her, blacks! Arrest her, Adrian!" cried Madame Varlville, much excited. "She may spring away and escape. The honor of the house of Varlville must be preserved!"

There was no need for the gag which Perez and Juan placed instantly upon the mouth of Mercita. She had swooned.

"I will remove the gag, Madame," said Adraste Scipian. "She has fainted."

He removed the gag, and unperceived by Madame Varlville and Adrian, let fall a few drops from a vial into the mouth of his intended victim.

"Guilty terror overcame her!" ejaculated Madame Varlville.

"Ah! we can have no just doubt of that, Madame," replied Adraste Scipian. "But she does not revive as speedily as we desire, Madame."

"Restore her to consciousness as soon as you can, Adraste Scipian. Monsieur Dudley and I will converse apart while you attend to her," remarked Madame Varlville, who then walked away a few paces, and sat down upon a rude bench at the foot of a great tree.

Adrian accompanied her.

"In what language, mother, did Scipian address Mercita?" asked Adrian.

"In Russe, which I can read well, and which I can recognize when spoken, but which I do not understand well. Well, she is the criminal, my son. Thank God that Leon is innocent! It is plain that the reasoning and the belief of Adraste Scipian was correct. She meant to destroy Leon de Vargas. The Voodoo doctor is certainly a remarkable man! He has been the means of preserving the honor of the Varlville name. This matter must be vigilantly guarded, my son. But Adraste Scipian approaches."

"Madame," said the pretended Voodoo doctor, as he drew near and bowed, "the woman appears to be very ill. The sudden detection of her guilt has stupefied her. She stares wildly at us, and makes no reply. A shock of the brain, Madame, which will readily yield to my treatment in a few hours. She needs repose—profound sleep. Before I give her a narcotic, I thought it well to inform you."

"Oh, I willingly resign her case to you, Adraste Scipian."

"Thanks, Madame. And it will be well for her to remain in the hut till to-morrow."

"As all is plain now, Adrian, there is no need for that formal trial of the case which I designed. She will undoubtedly confess all, when her strength is restored. We will return home, Adrian. To-morrow, Adraste Scipian, if she be in a fit state, I will ride over with Monsieur Dudley and hear her confession. If she is ready to make it, let me know at an early hour to-morrow."

"Madame, I will inform you before noon of to-morrow."

"Very well. You spoke of Père Dominique yesterday."

"He departs for Cuba on Saturday next, Madame."

"Ah, and to-day is Thursday. When you come to see me to-morrow, ask Père Dominique to accompany you. I wish to speak with him. I see that Joseph and Juan have carried the woman into the hut, and I will detain you no longer."

Adraste Scipian bowed, and Madame Varlville, with Adrian, rode away.

Mercita, nearly motionless, and wholly unconscious of her situation, had been placed upon Juan's bed, over which Perez had cast a new and hitherto unused blanket, ere he permitted her form to rest upon the sordid bedding used by the old negro.

"We will wait and see what these rascally Russians mean to do," was the resolve of Perez, from the moment he had seen Mercita swoon.

And such was still his resolve as he crouched on the earthern floor, awaiting the coming of the two plotters.

Before Adraste Scipian entered the hut he whistled shrilly, facing toward the north.

The signal was instantly answered by the appearance of Ivan, in the garb of a sailor. He carried a musket in his hand, and was otherwise well armed.

"I held my aim on the head of Adrian Dudley all the time you conversed, your Highness," said Ivan, "and the sound of your whistle while he was here, would have sent a ball crashing through his skull."

"I know that, Ivan, and I am glad there was no necessity for the deed," replied Adraste Scipian. "All has resulted to our desires."

He then quickly told Ivan all that had passed, as we have related it.

"There is no fear of their return?" asked Ivan.

"None whatever. Madame Varlville is too exhausted to think of returning to-day. Adrian Dudley of course will not leave her before she is at home, and by that time it will be nearly night. Certainly he will not come back then. There is no reason why he should. If he does he will [illegible] never go back [illegible] young man no harm, but he dies if he returns before we depart. Come. We will first cleanse her face of that cunning dye which has served her so well and so long; I wish to see what fairness of feature is still hers; and then I will take measures to restore her to consciousness."

They then entered the hut; and Adraste Scipian immediately began to bathe and sponge the face and neck of Mercita, after removing her cunningly fashioned head-dress.

Juan and Joseph, silent and watchful, sat on the Voodoo chest, gravely looking on.

Ivan held a basin, into which Adraste Scipian often dipped a sponge, as he slowly and carefully washed away the dye.

Mercita, unconscious of all, made no resistance, and lay motionless, with her eyes closed.

The light of day streaming in broadly from the open door, and an open window above her head, fell brightly upon her beautiful features.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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—Those who misuse a tendered hospitality are guilty of gross ingratitude.

SELLING HUCKLEBERRIES.

BY AMY RANDOLPH.

"The very realization of one's life-long dream of rural peace and beauty—a living idyl; a picture framed in green trees and tinkling cascades! Driver! halloa! stop! I'll get out here."

Mr. Dudley Escombe caught up his valise, and laid his hand upon the carryall door. The driver stared stupidly around.

"This 'ere an't the 'otel, sir."

"Does it look like one?" irately demanded Mr. Escombe. "I don't care whether it is or not. I mean to stop here, I tell you."

And stop Mr. Escombe would, and did, to the great perplexity of the rustic Jehu, who was compelled to wend his way passengerless on. He strode up the narrow grass-edged path, debonairly swinging his tourist umbrella as he walked, while the shadow of the huge tulip-trees swayed to and fro in the grass, and a blackbird, hidden in some mass of foliage, poured forth his crystal rivulet of song.

"We don't take boarders," said old Granny Parley, who stood in the vine-embowered door-way, a yellow-skinned, spectacled impersonation of Eld. "But if you can put up with our ways, and an't *too* partickler, there's the gable room, and—"

"Oh, I'll risk it," said Mr. Escombe, gazing delightedly round at the blue range of hills in the distance, and the silver glimmer of a tiny waterfall in the foreground, where wild briers braided their green tresses in the spray, and a solitary wild rose shook its pink leaflets down into the hurrying tide. "I would sleep on a board, and eat oatmeal porridge, for the luxury of dwelling in a spot like this!"

"He's crazy, an't he?" apprehensively whispered old Mrs. Parley, to her rheumatic better half, as Mr. Dudley Escombe sallied forth to sketch one of the pretty sylvan views.

"No—not that exactly," said Amaziah Parley, gazing reflectively into the bowl of his pipe. "But he's a genius."

"O!" said Mrs. Parley. "But geniuses pay board, don't they?"

"Sometimes," said Mr. Parley. "This one will, I guess."

"Not here? Not at the Assuwam House? Why, they told me he was to arrive the first of August."

Miss Belle Amory's pretty pencilled brows met; she shrugged her shoulders, and flung her fan wrathfully to one side.

"Perhaps he will be here yet, my dear," said her mother soothingly.

"No, he won't. It's just my luck! I wish, now, I had gone on to Niagara with the Ellyses. Lord George Moreau was to be there, and a title is something, even though he don't happen to have so much money as Dudley Escombe."

And the pretty fortune-huntress made herself as disagreeable as she could to her patient mother and much-enduring old maid aunt, all day long. What was the use of the silken black curls and the satin-smooth skin, and the eyes that were like an Eastern gazelle's, if no Dudley Escombe ventured within the range of her fascinations? Poor Belle! she was ready to exclaim with the wise man of old, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!"

"I don't know what in creation I'm to do," said Granny Parley. "All them eighteen quarts of huckleberries is picked, and Amaziah he's abed with the rheumatiz, and I ha'n't a soul to drive me down to the hotel! It's an awful pity to have 'em spile, but I own I ha'n't the courage to drive Black Nick myself. I always wanted Amaziah to sell him, but there, he never did think a woman's advice was worth nothin'!"

Mr. Dudley Escombe looked up from his water-colors.

"Suppose you allow me to drive you," he said.

"You! But you're a gentleman!"

"Well, what then? Do you suppose gentlemen do not know how to drive?" laughed Escombe. "I'll wager, now, that I can drive Black Nick quite as well as my friend Mr. Parley."

"'Tan't that," said Mrs. Parley; "only I'm an old woman, and the wagon an't none o' the newest, and—"

"Never mind all that," said Dudley cheerily. "Just lend me one of your husband's broad-brimmed harvest hats, for mine had a tumble into the cascade this morning, and isn't dry yet, and we'll be off before those eighteen quarts of huckleberries spoil."

And when Escombe helped the stiff-jointed old woman to her seat on the buffalo-covered board, and sprang up beside her, you never could have told from his demeanor that she was not a Fifth Avenue belle and beauty *en route* for the Central Park in a Brewster wagon.

For Dudley Escombe's was one of those rarely gifted natures wherein the old sacred flame of chivalry burns eternally on the altar of the human heart. To him every woman was a woman, in whatever garb or guise she presented herself, and as such, entitled to the homage of every man.

As they rattled up to the door of the Assuwam House, Miss Belle Amory stood on the steps, in an airy, floating costume of pale pink muslin, with a white Swiss hat overshadowing her curls, and a flush as delicate as the first rose glow of an Alpine sunrise on her lovely cheeks.

"Move out of the way, can't you?" said she sharply. "The idea of a vulgar old huckleberry cart stopping just in front of *me!*"

Poor Granny Parley, between her natural stiffness and the embarrassment of being thus imperiously addressed, contrived to catch her foot in the reins, and fell, almost at the feet of the gazelle-eyed beauty.

"Do pick her up, Belle," exclaimed a voice from the window. "Poor thing! perhaps she has sprained her ankle!"

"Hold your tongue, mamma," cried Belle, turning sharply. "What is it to me whether she has sprained her ankle or not? I wish you wouldn't be so ridiculous."

And she stepped gingerly out of the possibility of any contact with one whom she deemed so far below the sphere of her own butterfly existence.

Before Granny Parley could rise, however, Dudley Escombe had sprung from his seat, and was at her side.

"I hope you are not hurt?" he said courteously.

"No, I an't hurt," the old woman answered, slowly regaining her feet; "but I was pretty consid'able scared, and—"

"Let me carry the huckleberries in," said Mr. Escombe. "Sit here and rest yourself on the veranda until I return."

And without waiting for her remonstrances, he took up the huge tin pail and disappeared.

The landlord of the Assuwam House stared to see Mr. Dudley Escombe walk into the office with so plebeian a burden.

"Huckleberries!" said that gentleman affably, setting down the pail with one hand, while with the other he removed Amaziah Parley's harvest hat, and wiped the beads of perspiration from his brow. "Sixteen cents a quart."

"You're not selling 'em yourself!" cried mine host.

"Yes, I am," said Mr. Escombe. "Quick, now, Hadley, and make your bargain, for I can't stay long."

When Mr. Dudley Escombe returned to the door, his tin pail empty, and a roll of currency in his hand, Miss Amory tripped smilingly to greet him.

"Mr. Escombe! Pray pardon me, but is not this a strange masquerade?"

He lifted the flap-brimmed hat.

"Perhaps; but it was not meant for one, Miss Amory."

Belle still lingered.

"I hope the nice old—old lady wasn't hurt?" she cooed.

"Your sympathy comes rather late, Miss Amory," Mr. Escombe frigidly returned. "Good-morning."

He sprang into the wagon, took the reins from Granny Parley's hands and drove off.

"What a beautiful face that young lady has!" cried Mrs. Parley instinctively.

"Yes. It is a pity her heart does not correspond!" said Dudley Escombe.

While Belle swept into the house, her fair brow crimsoned with passion.

"To be cheated out of a hundred thousand dollars and a handsome husband," she sputtered; "and all through an old huckleberry woman!"

For Miss Amory was like a good many other worldlings, and laid the blame where it was not due.

◆

WOOING AN HEIRESS.

BY ANNA SHIELDS.

"Tell me who is here this summer?"

Fred. Dayton lighted a fresh cigar as he spoke, and balanced his chair dexterously upon two legs, as he puffed away in the moonlight.

His companion, smoking and rocking in precisely the same fashion, as they sat upon the wide front of Mrs. Melton's boarding-house at N——, replied:

"Some of last season's party, and some new ones."

"That's definite!"

"My wife has a pretty cousin with her this year. An heiress too, Fred."

"What's the figure?"

"Fifty thousand from a grandfather, in her own right, and probably as much more when her bachelor uncle, who is her guardian, leaves this world."

"Is there any chance?"

"She is fancy free as yet, I believe. I should be glad to bestow my cousinly regards upon you, Fred. But, after all, you have no occasion to look out for an heiress, with your fortune."

"Bless your innocence, Tom! a man never has so much but what he wants more. I could easily dispose of fifty thousand more, if it only bought finery for the future Mrs. Dayton. I think I will try for it."

Leaning from an upper window, but concealed by a thick running vine, a lady caught the words of this conversation, and at this point drew in her pretty head with a very decided jerk.

"Upon my word!" she soliloquized. "I am really very much obliged to Tom! So his friend will try to win my money, will he? Not a word about me! Didn't even ask if I was an angel or a witch. Thinks he could easily dispose of my income, and would even graciously allow me to buy finery with my own money. I am fairly boiling with rage. The impudent puppy! I'll make him pay for this, or my name is not Jennie Willett."

There was a spice of coquetry in the heart of the pretty heiress, that had not been crushed out in any experience of her petted life, and that flamed up into a brilliant blaze under the provocation of this overheard conversation. She was scarcely to be censured for her annoyance, and she firmly resolved that if the suitor for her money had a heart, she would add to the sting of her refusal of his offer by wounding that organ, if possible.

So when Mr. Fred. Dayton was presented by pretty Mrs. Hogan to her cousin, he found himself greeted with a graceful cordiality that was flattering as well as delightful. Evidently, he thought, Tom, like a clever fellow as he was, had spoken a good word for him to the heiress.

It was after breakfast, upon the porch, that the introduction took place, and the gentleman, who looked handsome himself in his wide straw hat and white linen suit, decided that the heiress was a very fascinating little damsel. Her dress of clear white muslin was dashed here and there with vivid red ribbons, that suited well her rich brunette beauty, for she was something more than merely pretty, with her great black eyes and heavy masses of jetty hair that scorned a chignon. Under the broad brim of her shade hat, her clear olive complexion and crimson cheeks shone out with winning brightness, and even in the smile of greeting she proved that she possessed the power of expression in rare beauty.

It was on the programme for the pleasures of that sunny June day, that a party was to wander in shady woods for half a mile, to seek a spot famous for wild strawberries, and there to enjoy a picnic luncheon. So, as the walkers marshalled for their procession, it fell out that Miss Jennie Willett found by her side Mr. Fred. Dayton's six feet of manhood, and resigned to his keeping the basket that contained her share of the luncheon, and was to receive the results of her strawberry picking. Flirting in a ball-room, flirting on the sea-shore by the light of the moon and to the sound of the waves, flirting in an easy rolling carriage, and flirting in every separate phase of life's young dreams, have their votaries; but for a dangerous, bewildering form of flirtation, none can excel flirting in the country, in a summer boarding-house.

Before that first morning was over, Mr. Dayton was secretly wishing he had not been quite so frank with his friend Tom Hogan. What if Tom betrayed him to Fanny, and Fanny told Jennie! He turned cold at the mere idea.

Already in his heart he called her Jennie. Already he had found out that the hand he had held in assisting his charge over a rough pile of stones was soft and pretty; that the foot, a glimpse of which was revealed on the stepping-stones of a noisy brook, was tiny and aristocratic in shape; that the voice that rippled out from the delicate mouth was low and sweet, and that the deep, dark eyes could flash and melt, laugh and sadden, in a way as delightful as it was bewildering.

He was in the net Miss Jennie was spreading for him before the strawberry field was reached. And the lady? Commencing her flirtation with her heart full of pique, and a desire for revenge, she would not admit to herself what had made her morning so pleasant. She told herself it was mere gratification that her plans were working so nicely, and the prospect was so fair for her to make Mr. Dayton smart for his insolence.

Yet—and she stifled a little sigh at the thought—it was a pity this delightful deference, this effort to please, was all assumed, to gain her money. She recalled words that proved her new suitor no mere puppy, but a man who had read much and thought deeply. She was certain not one of her admirers offered attention more delicately, or bore himself more gallantly.

The summer days passed swiftly to two of Mrs. Melton's boarders, and meaning smiles hovered over the faces of the others when Mr. Dayton and Miss Willett were mentioned, or were noted in each other's company, for the flirtation was carried on briskly. It was only flirtation, to punish him for his insolence, Jennie sternly told her heart, when she caught herself musing over his words, recalling the expression of his large brown eyes, thinking how a smile brightened his face, wondering if all men who had travelled were as fascinating in conversation as this one; sighing too, sometimes, as she thought the pleasant summer was drawing to a close, and she must soon dismiss her cavalier from her side for ever. For—and her cheeks burned then—it was to her money all this winsome court was paid, and the smiles, the deference, the attentions were all for the sake of handling her grandfather's legacy.

And while the heiress sighed and mused, the wooer was blessing the lucky hour that brought him to N—— for the summer. Never in all his travels had he met with a face, a voice, a manner, that touched his heart as it was now touched. He had forgotten the foolish speech he had made about the heiress, and had given his heart to the woman. He saw her busy with pretty feminine work in the mornings, and his fancy pictured her sewing and rocking so in a home. He heard her rich contralto voice in song, and he thought of her as making the evenings fly, when a husband came home weary with business cares. He saw her in superb evening dresses, at the many gay gatherings at N——, and he thought how proud a man might be of her beauty and taste, when the voice of society praised his wife. And under all these surface attractions, weighty as they were, he paid homage to the girl's dignity, modesty and pure heart, though she could be so bright and lively.

The day came when the full heart found vent in speech, and as the young couple walked in a shady lonely lane, Fred.'s words, warm and tender, spoke the true and sincere passion in his heart. It was some moments before the answer came. Jennie had to battle with a desire to put her little hand in his and give him back love for love. She had to school her face and steady her voice, before she could answer.

"Mr. Dayton, my answer to you must be to recall to your memory your conversation with Mr. Hogan, on the porch, the evening of your arrival. Every word of it was distinctly audible in my room."

"Then you have been playing with me!" he cried fiercely.

"I have been endeavoring to prove to you that my money had a human appendage."

It was well for her composure then, that he turned abruptly from her and strode rapidly homeward, leaving her to turn into a narrow by-path in the woods and sob out all her pain in solitude.

For she realized now, in bitter humiliation, that whatever Fred. Dayton had sought in his wooing, he had won her heart. It contracted with quick spasms of pain as she thought that now he would leave her. Never again could she hear the deep musical voice speaking tender words, never see the deep, dark eyes look lovingly into her own again. As the tears chased one another down her cheeks, one of the unerring instincts of true love came into her heart, and she felt deeply and keenly that the love she had insulted and rejected was not the false suit of a fortune-hunter, but the true heart seeking what is the only sure guarantee for wedded happiness.

She crept slowly home at last, hiding her red, swollen eyes under her vail, and went to her own room, hearing the voices of all at luncheon, as she went hastily up stairs. Upon her dressing-table lay a letter, and as she read it there came into her busy brain a quick, luminous idea.

Over her sad face stole a look of resolution, and a certain hope too in her heart was pictured in her face.

"I'll try it!" she said. "My eyes are in splendid condition. I'll try it!"

She took her open letter in her hand, and went mournfully into the room where luncheon was in progress of demolition. Her eyes were not so red nor swollen but that they detected Fred. Dayton crumbling untasted cake upon his plate, and trying to look as usual.

As she appeared, Fannie cried:

"Jennie! what is the matter? You look as if you had been crying your eyes out."

"You would look so too," with a little hysterical sob, "if you had my news to bear."

"What is it, dear?" and Fannie was at her cousin's side, all sympathy.

"The S—— Bank is broke!"

"By Jove!" cried Tom, "all your money was in that!"

Jennie hid her face on Fannie's shoulder, and sobbed:

"Uncle George was married last week!"

Tom's comment upon that was contained in a long whistle.

"Tom, you ought to be ashamed of yourself!" cried Fannie indignantly. "Never mind, Jennie. Come to my room, darling."

And Jennie suffered herself to be led away and comforted and petted, hearing warmest assurances of unchanged love, offers of a home, and a thousand pleasant words from Fannie, till Tom came up to indorse the whole of it, and add:

"Fred. Dayton wants to see you, Jennie, in the parlor. Jennie—" the honest fellow hesitated then a little—"before you go, will you let me say a word as if I were your brother?"

"Certainly I will."

"Fred. Dayton loves you. I know it, and I think he means to tell you so. But, Jennie, if you do not really love him, will you remember that so long as Fan. and I have a home or a meal, you are as welcome as a sister to your share of them, and as dear to both of us."

"You may be sure I will never forget it," Jennie said earnestly. "But will you, please, read Uncle George's letter while I am gone?"

She left the room gravely, but in the hall she executed a little *pas seul* that would have considerably astonished her sympathizing friends if they had seen it.

She found Fred. Dayton waiting in the parlor, marching up and down with true masculine impatience. Before she went in, she looked a moment at the tall graceful figure so buoyant with animation, at the handsome face radiant now with impatient hope, and in her heart there was a glad little song, with the refrain, "He loves me! he loves me!"

All the gladness was banished from her step and face, however, as she slowly advanced to meet her lover. He could wait for no formality of greeting. Abruptly, earnestly, with his whole soul in his voice and eyes, he said:

"Jennie, you rebuked me sharply to-day for my presumptuous and insolent speech to your cousin. I acknowledge that I deserved it; but now, now that the money is gone, will you not believe me, that the dearest hope of my life, the dearest wish of my heart, is to win your love?"

"You are sure it is *me* you love?" she said, in a very low voice.

"Before I had known you a week, darling, I had quite forgotten that you were an heiress. I only knew that you were the only woman I could ever love, or whose love would be precious in my heart. Surely you may trust me now. Be my wife, and every hour shall prove to you how sincerely and tenderly I love you. Speak to me, Jennie. Why do you hide your face?"

She did not tell him it was to hide her smiling mouth, her dancing eyes, but she allowed him to draw her gently into a close embrace, to take in his own her soft little hand, and tell her sweet and loving words.

"You will be my wife?" he whispered, and then she looked up.

"Yes, I will," she said, blushing, but looking bravely into his eyes, "for I believe you love me, and I love you with my whole heart. Stop!" for his lips were approaching hers, to close the speech, "don't kiss me yet. I forgot to mention that Uncle George drew all my money from the S—— Bank before it broke, and has it in safe deposit elsewhere. Now you may kiss me."

"But, Jennie," Fannie asked, when she and Tom joined the lovers some time later, "what on earth were you crying about?"

Jennie never told, but Mr. Fred. Dayton made some guesses at a private interview, that Jennie would neither deny nor confirm.

◆

THEN AND NOW.

It seems, as I look directly back upon the event itself, but a brief space since my friend Plummer left his type-case at my side and went West; but a great change has taken place since then. He took his wife at Bath, Me., in the spring of 1839, and set out for Peoria, Ill., with no time and no money to waste. He kept memoranda of his expenses, and those expenses were kept within the narrowest possible limits. Not long ago we met, and in overhauling some old papers he came across the items of travelling expense of the aforetime journey.

"Mercy!" he cried, as he ran his eye over the page. "What a change! Three weeks ago I came from Peoria to Bath in less than eight-and-forty hours."

I took the paper, and transcribed as follows:

Bath to Portland, stage, - - -	$5 00
Portland to Boston, steamboat, -	7 50
Boston to Pittsburg, via Stonington railroad, steamboats and canals, - - - - - - -	64 00
Pittsburg to St. Louis, - - -	50 00
St. Louis to Peoria, - - -	15 00
	$141 50

The time occupied was fifteen days, and the expense was for two passengers. S. C., JR.

LIFE'S OUTLOOK.

BY MRS. M. A. KIDDER.

"An outlook into life!" be not deceived,
Oh, young and buoyant heart that never grieved,
That never yet a sweet, bright dream hath dreamed,
That was not by thy reasoning all it seemed.

Life's high-road looks to thee an even way,
O'erhung with bloom, and jubilant and gay
With singing birds and softly dimpling rills,
And sunlight slanting down green fadeless hills.

The snares and pitfalls are all out of sight;
My wondering soul would ask, "And is this right?"
While some fair youth from Pleasure's fount would drink,
Lo! and behold, he stands on ruin's brink!

The deepest pit is vailed by sweetest flowers,
The subtlest worm is hid in fairest bowers,
And yet in this my questioning mind would rest—
God, knowing all things, planneth for the best.

If youth began by seeing all the worst,
Hope would be lost, and life a thing accurst;
Glad feet that now swift eagle pinions borrow,
Would shrink to-day, and miss the goal to-morrow.

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THE RIVAL SISTERS.

By ELIZA A. DUPUY,

AUTHOR OF THE "EVIL GENIUS," THE "WHITE TERROR," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XLIII.

DESPAIR OF MACON AND MRS. BLAKE.

We must now go back to the unfortunate girl who had been stripped of her birthright, and left to the tender mercies of those who were so deeply interested in keeping her in the half-dazed state in which she was left.

When that letter of Hester's came, in which she made known the discovery of Estelle Landry's marriage with Raymond De Lorme, it would be difficult to tell which was most distracted thereby—Macon or Mrs. Blake. They must both give up the creature they so fiercely loved, or see all their subtly woven plans come to naught.

How Mrs. Blake bewailed her own folly—how Macon cursed himself for having taken part in this deep iniquity, it is useless to relate. The first scene between them was a violent one, but the conviction gradually came to them that they must act in concert, or all would be lost.

Amid all her love for her daughter, Mrs. Blake was not forgetful of herself, and the proposal of Hester to receive her as a disguised dependent, and conceal her identity from the husband she meant to marry, was extremely distasteful to her. In his boyhood she had seen but little of Raymond De Lorme, but she remembered that even then he was keen-sighted and observant, and she felt certain that he would penetrate any disguise she might assume. There would be danger every day and every hour, and she declared that she could not, and would not live such a life as must be hers under such conditions.

Neither would she consent to give up the child she adored, even to secure to her the brilliant destiny that seemed almost within her grasp. Hester must relinquish her ambitious dreams, and find a safer home for them both than Raymond could afford them, and the sooner she understood this the better for them all.

Macon was equally resolved that he would not be made the sport of this woman for whom he was willing to sacrifice all that should have been dear to a man of honorable feeling. She had pledged herself to him solemnly, sacredly, and she should yet be his, in spite of every obstacle she could throw between them. That she did not love him he began to comprehend, and fierce jealousy was aroused toward that man she seemed so willing to accept as her husband, although his hand had already been given to another. He scorned her for this, yet he did not love her less. She had bewitched his senses, and such as she was, he was ready to sacrifice everything he had hitherto valued to make her his own—to bind her to him by bonds that could not be broken—that would give him the mastery of her fate.

Late in the evening he sat in Mrs. Blake's little parlor, gnawing his lip, and thinking over the contents of the two letters written weeks apart, but which, by some irregularity in the mails, had both arrived on the same day. The first one was filled with false professions of love; the second told of the secret marriage, and offered him a bribe to allow the writer to consummate her wicked plans without interference. Yet even while proving to him that her love for him was a pretence, she coolly intimated that she expected from him such service as would legalize the marriage she intended to make: legalize it by putting out of the way forever the helpless being who stood in her path. *He* must soil his soul with crime to give *her* a lawful right to the position of Raymond De Lorme's wife. *Never!* And he swore a deep oath to himself to claim her for his own, and make good his claim, at any cost to her or to himself.

Macon had thought deeply on the complicated position in which they were all placed, but he finally settled on a course of action, and he had come to Elm Cottage to consult with Mrs. Blake, before taking any steps to recover her daughter and restore Estelle to her family and friends.

While waiting for Mrs. Blake's appearance, he paced the floor impatiently; for, having settled his plans, he was anxious to communicate them to his co-worker, and then put them into execution as speedily as possible.

At length Mrs. Blake came in, carrying a lamp in her hand, and its light revealed the change which a few weeks of suffering had made in her appearance. She looked ten years older than she had done on that summer night when she revealed her past life to her daughter; her black hair was thickly streaked with gray, and her face had a worn and weary expression, as if this last life battle had exhausted all her powers of endurance.

The interview was long and bitter. Macon declared that Hester should be his wife, whatever might come of it. Mrs. Blake was glad of this, for if Hester should marry Raymond de Lorme, she could never live with her; whereas if she married Macon, her home with her daughter would be assured. They would appropriate the thirty thousand dollars already sent on by Hester, and also take possession of the Landry diamonds, worth a hundred thousand dollars, or else raise that sum on the estate, and then all flee to Europe. Estelle was to be restored to health; and it was supposed that her gratitude to Macon for saving her life would be sufficient to ward off any pursuit or prosecution of the despoilers of her estate.

Macon was to rent a house in the outskirts of New York, of his friend Hinton, to which Mrs. Blake was to remove with Estelle, Mrs. Muller and Eunice Barker, and there remain till Macon could go to Louisiana, and elope with Hester and as much of Estelle's fortune as they could manage to carry off with them.

Mrs. Blake asked, with some solicitude:

"But what are we to do with Estelle Landry when her mind begins to clear? She will insist on being restored at once to her friends, and until you and Hester are safe, and I am ready to join you, that could not be done."

"I have settled all that. Miss Landry is to be treated with every degree of consideration that is consistent with her safe-keeping; but until I return from Louisiana with Hester as my companion, you are to play the part of jailer to her, and allow her to communicate with no one except Mrs. Muller. As long as that woman thinks it to her interest to keep her prisoner safe, she will not fail to do so; and we can offer her a larger bribe. It does not matter what promises we make when we have no idea of fulfilling them," and Macon laughed sardonically.

Had he known who overheard that laugh, and the words that preceded it, the speaker would have cowered before the danger he had himself evoked. He sat at the side of the fireplace, near the window at which Mrs. Muller had once before listened. Anticipating this interview, she had prepared the means of hearing all that passed between the two, whom she intuitively mistrusted. She had made a small fracture in the lowest pane of glass in the corner of the window, and left the shutter unfastened, that she might open it softly when the time for action came. The curtains were carefully looped back in such a manner as to conceal the broken pane, and a small wad of paper was thrust through the aperture till she was ready to use it.

With a dark shawl wrapped around her, she crouched beneath the window and overheard the entire conversation. Her rage, when she discovered the treachery intended toward herself, was vehement; but she wisely restrained her feelings, and crept back into the house, determined to checkmate the plotters at all hazards.

After Macon was gone, Mrs. Blake sat staring blankly in the fire till it was nearly out. She had plotted, planned and hated through years of her life; she had thrust her daughter into the dangerous web of wrong and deceit that now threatened to ensnare her; and what was the result? She must undo her work—must restore the child of her rival to her own, or lose forever that which was dearer to herself than all things else on earth.

What had she gained? Money, that was embezzled, when it might have been freely given, if the assistance rendered to Armand Landry and his daughter had been offered in good faith. She recalled that last terrible interview between herself and that dying man, and shivered. She had triumphed over him then, but retribution had already overtaken her, and she felt almost as if deserted by God and man in this hour of desolation.

The bitterness of death was in the thought that the daughter to whom she so tenaciously clung, was ready and willing to give her up for another; for Hester must be aware that her plan of keeping her near her would prove impracticable.

She arose at last, chilled to the heart, and went to her own room. There a bright fire burned, and she employed herself in writing till a late hour of the night, but her passionate appeal was destined never to reach the hands for which it was designed.

CHAPTER XLIV.

MRS. MULLER'S COUNTERPLOT.

Mrs. Blake passed a wretched night, and in the morning, when Mrs. Muller came into her room, she declared herself unable to rise for breakfast.

"You can bring me a cup of strong coffee, and in an hour or two I shall feel better," she said. "I have a great deal to attend to to-day, and I must make an effort to get up and begin to pack for the removal we contemplate."

"Are we going immediately, ma'am? If we are, I must go to the village to see about some business of my own."

Mrs. Blake fixed her eyes sharply upon her, and asked:

"What can you have to look after there, that your husband cannot attend to? You are too much given to gossip, Mrs. Muller, and I hardly think it safe for you to go where you will be tempted to say more than you ought."

The manner of the woman was perfectly respectful, though her heart was rankling with hatred and burning with vengeance, and she deprecatingly said:

"I hope you won't object to my going to Blanton to-day, ma'am, for indeed I have something to do there that Hans can't settle if he tried ever so much. He's a good soul, but he's stupid, you know, and this is a thing that must be attended to before I go away. You needn't be afeard of me blabbing what I ought not to, ma'am, for when I've got so much money at stake, I sha'n't be likely to say anything to put it in danger. I'm too sharp to compromise my own interests by gabbling to other people."

Mrs. Blake sighed heavily, and wearily said:

"I suppose it will be of no use for me to refuse the permission you ask, for I can plainly see that you intend to go, let me say what I will. I hope you will not be absent long, for I shall need your assistance to-day."

"I must go, as I said jest now, ma'am; but I'll hurry back, and make up for lost time by working later to-night. You can trust me to keep our secret. If I hinted at it here, I'd fare as badly as you would, so I'll keep my own counsel. You've got a letter written, I see, and I can take it to the office for you."

Mrs. Blake's desk was left open, and on it lay a closed envelope, addressed to Mrs. Caroline Linley, New York, to the care of Robert Hinton, Esq. The blank envelope within contained the epistle to her daughter, which Hinton was to direct and forward to its destination. He acted as Macon's agent, but he was not aware of the reasons for secrecy in the mysterious correspondence which passed through his hands. As Hinton was well paid for his services, he did what was asked of him without making inconvenient inquiries.

Mrs. Blake's head was dizzy and aching, and her brain was far from being as clear as usual, or she would never have trusted Mrs. Muller with this important missive. She now said:

"I have been writing to a friend who will attend to some commissions for me, and you may as well put the letter in the office, I suppose. But you must not go till you have attended to your patient."

"No, ma'am, I don't intend to. I sha'n't go till the house is put to rights, and the breakfast things cleaned up. If I see Dr. Macon, shall I tell him you are sick?"

"That will not be necessary, as he is coming here after he makes his morning calls."

The woman took up the letter and held it loosely in her hand, as if careless about taking it at all. For an instant Mrs. Blake was tempted to take it from her and await Macon's arrival, but the fear that he might tamper with it, and make himself master of what she had written, withheld her. She remembered that she had spoken of him with bitter harshness, even while urging Hester to give him her hand, as the only avenue of safety for herself, and with a sigh, she said:

"Be very careful of my letter, Mrs. Muller, for I am anxious that it shall reach its destination safely. I should have posted it myself, but for this dreadful headache."

"Oh, I shall take the very best care of it, ma'am. You needn't have no fears about that. I'll go now and look after things, and I'll send Eunice with the coffee right away."

Mrs. Blake saw her slip the letter in her pocket and leave the room, but she was really suffering too much to think or care about the result of the confidence she had placed in her messenger. Mrs. Muller had often performed a similar service for her, and her letters had always gone safely; so why should she doubt her now? The coffee was soon after brought to her, and after sipping a portion of it, the racking pain in her temples subsided a little, and she fell asleep.

In the mean time Mrs. Muller performed all her household duties, gave Estelle her breakfast, and tried to make her understand that in her she had gained a fast friend. But she only smiled vacantly on her, and said:

"I like Eunice best; she cannot talk, but she knows what I mean all the same. Where is my mamma? I am so glad to have found a mother, that I like to see her every day."

"She's got the headache, and you must stay in this room to-day. It's too cold for you to go in the garden."

A shadow swept over the face of the girl, and she almost petulantly said:

"I like the garden best, and I shall go there if I please. What right have you to tell me what I am to do, and what I am not to do? You are only the servant here, and I—well, I don't know, but I suppose I am the daughter of the house, if Mrs. Blake is my mother."

"Of course you are, *if* she's your mother; but if she isn't, what then? I'm going to be a better friend to you than she could ever be, Miss Landry, and you'd better take to me, I can tell you."

Estelle's face flushed, and a faint gleam of intelligence came into her eyes as the sound of her own name fell on her ears for the first time since the day of her father's death. But it faded away as it came, and she vaguely muttered:

"I knew somebody of that name once; it can't be mine, you know, for I am Hester Blake."

"You are as much her as I'm the queen of Sheba," said Mrs. Muller, in a vexed tone; "but you've got to be such a muddle-headed goose that it's no use to try to make you understand anything. Mebbe it's better so for a while, but I mean you to find out that I'm the best friend you ever had, my dear. If you'll wrap yourself up in a warm shawl, you may as well go out in the garden, for moping here by yourself won't help you to get back what you've lost."

"I have lost a great deal—I know that, somehow, though I cannot think what it is," said Estelle plaintively. "If you only knew what a weight presses on my brain all the time, you would not wonder that I cannot remember what happened before I came here."

"It's best you shouldn't do that jest yet, my pretty; but I'll find somebody to help that poor head of yours, see if I don't. And when it's as clear as a bell again, you'll confess that I've stood your friend; won't you now, my lamb?"

"I don't know. Please let Eunice come with me; I like her best. She dances in the garden walks, and finds flowers for me. I do not care for anything now as much as for flowers, and there are hardly any to be found."

"Eunice can't go with you to-day, and on second thoughts, you had better stay in the house till I come back. I am going to the little town close by, and I'll bring you something from there that will do your poor head good. It's a mighty pretty head, but it an't of much use to you jest now. We'll put it right before we're done with you though, and then you'll know who to be grateful to. Stay in the house, and look after Mrs. Blake till I get back, and I'll be sure to bring you something nice."

"I don't seem to care for anything," was the listless reply, "but if Eunice cannot go with me, I will stay where I am;" and she sat down by the window which looked into the yard, and gazed moodily on the fading landscape without.

Her expression was generally serene and happy, but some change seemed to have passed over her, and to-day she looked more thoughtful than usual, and Mrs. Muller began to hope that a reaction was slowly taking place, and nature was doing for her what Dr. Macon's skill had failed to achieve.

The nurse earnestly regarded her a few moments before going out; the pupils of her large soft eyes were unusually dilated, and she had a constant habit of raising her hand to the side of her head which had been injured, and pressing the tips of her fingers on one particular spot. Estelle had complained more than once of constant pain there, and the sagacious observer made up her mind that some pressure on the brain was the cause of the mental darkness in which the poor girl wandered. If some one could be found with skill enough to relieve that, all would be well with her, and to do this was Mrs. Muller's resolve.

She paused at the door, and asked:

"If you are so fond of flowers, wouldn't you like to have some made of wax? There's a young girl in the village who makes 'em as natural as can be, and if you'd like to try to imitate 'em, I'll get the things for you. It might amuse you when you have to stay in the house."

A slight gleam of pleasure came into the sad young face, and Estelle eagerly said:

"I should like that. I—I have made wax flowers before this, but I cannot think who taught me how to do it. If I cannot get real roses and pinks, I can imitate them, and that will be something to do. I am well now, and I am tired of being so idle. The Evil One tempts idle people, you know."

"Oh, yes, indeed, and them that is industrious too, as I could testify. But that an't here nor there. I'll bring you the things you'll want, and a few flowers for models; but I must go now, for I haven't any time to spare. You'll stay in this room till I come back, won't you, dear?"

"Yes, I will stay," was the listless reply, for the momentary gleam of pleasure had faded from Estelle's face. "It is warm here, and may be Eunice can come to me after a while."

Mrs. Muller nodded and went her way, certain that the unfortunate girl would keep her promise, for she had never yet broken one she had made. The moral training she had received was still the guiding influence of her life, though the mental faculties were so fatally clouded. Estelle sunk into a comfortable chair, and dreamed, Heaven knows of what, for she was incapable of consecutive thought, and on that day she was sad and sorrowful, without understanding why her late serenity had left her.

In her rapid walk toward the town, Mrs. Muller kept a sharp look-out for Macon, for she did not wish to encounter him before accomplishing her errand. She had decided to call at Dr. Presley's office, and after talking with him, if she found him in a condition to understand the position of affairs, she would take him into her confidence, and entreat him to find means to aid her in securing the control of Miss Landry till she was in a condition to be restored to her friends.

She was aware that Presley had recently inherited a legacy of a few hundred dollars, and that he was making efforts to extricate himself from the slough of debasement into which he had fallen, but how far he had succeeded in this Mrs. Muller did not know. He had reopened his old office, and the visitor was glad to see that the place had been renovated, and now wore quite a tidy and respectable appearance.

Things went favorably with Mrs. Muller, for as she entered the only street the village boasted, she saw Macon leaving it in the opposite direction; so she boldly went to his office, informed Mr. Simcox of Mrs. Blake's indisposition, and left a message for Macon, asking him to come to the Elms as soon as possible.

"He'll not be back for hours yet," said the student. "He's been sent for in a hurry to Stebbins' farm, where one of the boys has accidentally wounded himself with a shot gun. It's six miles away, you know, and the doctor won't be back before dinner-time. If Mrs. Blake is very sick, I can go out to see her."

"You needn't trouble yourself to do that, Mr. Simcox; she's only nervous and notionate; and if you was to go, she wouldn't see you. Dr. Macon's like a son to her, you know, and if she has the finger ache, she wants him to prescribe for her. You don't keep drugs for sale, I believe."

"No, we do not; but Presley has opened a shop for them lately, and I have heard that his stock is good, though Macon sends his patients to the other place when they want medicine that he doesn't carry in his saddlebags. I am sorry for old Presley, and if you want anything, I'll run down to his place and get it for you. The poor fellow is trying to get up again, and I hope he'll succeed."

"Thank you, Mr. Simcox; but I won't trouble you. I have to pass the place on my way to see a friend, and I'll just step in myself and get the trifle I want. Good-morning."

Mrs. Muller walked briskly away, and in a few moments came to the house she sought. She entered a small shop with an assortment of drugs on the shelves, and behind the counter sat Dr. Presley reading a newspaper. He was respectably dressed, and his face was beginning to lose the purple flush that had lately disfigured it. It was naturally an intelligent and good face, and as his visitor looked earnestly at him, she thought that she might trust him both to aid her, and to keep her secret till it would be safe to divulge it. He arose with alacrity, and said:

"You are my first customer to-day, Mrs. Muller, and I wonder how it happened that you come to me at all. I thought that Macon monopolized all the physicking at your house. What can I get for you, ma'am? Since people won't have my medical services, I must come down to sell the poisons my rival doses them so liberally with."

"I want to speak about the young lady, sir, but I've that to say that nobody must listen to but you. Can we talk here quite safe, sir? It's a most important matter, as you'll understand when I've told you what I came to say; but I wouldn't have any one to know that I've been consulting with you."

"We might talk here for hours to come, and it isn't likely that we should be interrupted; but if you have something unusual to communicate, as I judge from your manner, you had better come into my office. Nobody intrudes there now, and we shall be as safe from prying eyes as if we were in a desert."

"We'd best go there then, sir, and—and you must give me your word of honor as a gentleman, that you won't betray my confidence, and that you will help me to the best of your ability."

"I can safely do both, Mrs. Muller. A physician who speaks of the ailments confided to him is unworthy to belong to the profession, and of course it is my duty to aid you with the best skill I possess. This way, if you please. Since I took the front office for a drug shop, I have had a back room fitted up for consultations, though I hardly expected to have one so soon after my reformation commenced."

He led the way to a small, bare-looking apartment, with no carpet on the floor, and no fire in the grate, though the day was a cold one. There was a bookcase filled with ponderous volumes, a skeleton in a nook in the wall, grinning horribly upon them, a table and two worn-looking leather chairs.

"Sit down, Mrs. Muller, and unburden your mind. This is not a very inviting place, but, it is the best I can afford at present; and at any rate, you will speak to no other ears than mine while these walls inclose us."

But now that they were safe from interruption, Mrs. Muller was at a loss to know how to make the revelation she had determined on. She nervously said:

"I've got something to tell you, Doctor, that'll make you open your eyes and stare harder than you ever did before; but you've got to promise that you'll keep close about it till the time comes to speak out. If you'll do as I tell you, you can make a good chance of money, and snap your fingers at Dr. Macon forever afterward."

Presley began to look surprised and interested. He said:

"You are very mysterious, Mrs. Muller, but I frankly own that if the money is to be fairly earned, I am not the man to scorn it. As to Macon, I do not deny that I should like to get ahead of him for once. He has taken many mean advantages of me, and I owe him a heavy debt in reprisals, if I could only find the way to pay it."

"I've found it for you, sir; but you must be prudent, and do nothing that I don't approve."

Mrs. Muller then lowered her voice, and eagerly asked:

"The day you came out to the Elms did you have any suspicion that the sick girl was not Hester Blake? The likeness is wonderful, but it did not deceive *me*."

Presley regarded her in open-eyed astonishment, but he remembered the incident on the railroad train, and a sudden light dawned on him.

"I see it all now. The girl I spoke to on the train *was* Hetty Blake, after all. I was not so tipsy as not to know her. And afterward, when Macon took me out to the cottage, he purposely placed liquor in my way, and lingered so long afterward in making his calls that I was awfully drunk by the time I got there. I know now why he did it: he wished me to say that his patient was suffering from sun-stroke, and to tell people that I was mistaken in the identity of the girl I had seen. If *you* scented this villainy, Mrs. Muller, why have you kept dark so long, and what induced you to come to me now?"

"I come to you, sir, because they're a bad lot up there to have any dealings with. I don't deny, Doctor, that I agreed to help 'em after the thing was done, if I was well paid; but they're plotting now to cheat me, and to undo what they've done. I'm going to play their own game on 'em, and you and I will share the reward Miss Landry will gladly pay to them that stands her friends, when once you've got her head right, and she can understand things."

"When I have been made to understand things myself, I will see what I can do for you; but you forget that I know nothing of facts or motives. Please to make a clear statement, Mrs. Muller, and be as brief as you can."

The woman very concisely gave him an outline of all that had occurred, and admitted that she had assisted Mrs. Blake and Macon until she had good reason to believe that they intended to defraud her of the greater part of the promised reward.

Presley listened with vivid interest, and when she finished her recital, he drew a long breath and said:

"This beats all the villainy I ever heard of. I always knew that Macon was a mean scoundrel, but I had no idea he would be capable of so daring a thing as this. I'll pay him out for all his meanness now. I will show him up in his true colors, and give back that poor child to those that have the right to claim her. What has he done to her to keep her from knowing and understanding the fraud that has been practised? If she had been left to nature, she would have been well long ago."

"That is what she wouldn't, sir, for something is really wrong with her brain. Dr. Macon isn't surgeon enough to know what is the matter, but *you* are, and I want you to find the means of examining her head, and doing what is necessary, without—"

Presley eagerly interrupted her.

"The means are easily found, Mrs. Muller. I will take you before a magistrate, and get out a warrant for the apprehension of the guilty parties. Then I will undertake Miss Landry's case, and by the time her friends can get here, I will guarantee that she shall be in a fair way of recovery."

Mrs. Muller listened to this proposal in great alarm. She excitedly said:

"If we were to do that, how could we prove anything unless Miss Landry could speak for herself? You don't know Hester Blake as well as I do, or you'd understand that she'll defy us, unless we can bring the true heiress face to face with her, and in a condition to battle for her own rights. No, Doctor, you must cure the young lady first, and *then* we'll come down on 'em, and show the whole lot what's what."

After some consideration, Presley slowly said:

"I am afraid you are right, Mrs. Muller; but how am I to prescribe for this young lady? How, indeed, am I to approach her at all, guarded as she is?"

"That is what I came here to tell you. We are going to New York to stay there till Macon goes south, and comes back with Hester. They intend to secure a good pile of money, and go to Europe to live, and Miss Landry is to be left to find her way back to her friends. The first intention was to hold on to the whole estate, and put her in a lunatic asylum in France; but Macon has found out that Miss Landry is engaged to be married to a young man that is now on his travels, and he's so much afeard that Hester'll jilt *him*, and take the other one, for she used to play with him in her childhood, and was fond of him, that he's changed his mind, and would rather take half a loaf with Hester, than to risk losing her altogether. Now my plan is this: You can follow us to New York, and stop at some hotel. I will send a letter to you there, telling you where to meet me, and we can then settle on what is best to be done after Macon goes away. He will be in such a hurry to be off, that it won't be long before we shall be able to do just as we please."

"You seem to forget Mrs. Blake. She will be more watchful than ever, after her accomplice has left her in charge of a person whose detention is so important to them as that of Miss Landry."

"O no, I don't forget *her;* I shall be particularly careful of her, and I'm going to pay her back in her own coin for her intended treachery to me. I'll give her a dose as won't kill her, but it'll addle her brains a bit, and leave me free to act without being spied on. If you can find a safe and quiet place to take Miss Landry to, I will manage all the rest."

Presley regarded her fixedly, and asked:

"What do you propose to give Mrs. Blake? I will not have anything dangerous administered to her."

"You needn't be afeard, Doctor; I an't going to risk hanging to get rid of sich vermin as her. I shall only give her some of the mixtry Dr. Macon ordered me to put in that poor gal's food. I give her enough to see how it affected her, and then I stopped; for if I'd gone on with it, she might have been made a harmless idiot. That wouldn't have suited me, for I began to think them two plotters might throw me off, as I now know they mean to do. You and me'll prove too many for 'em, though."

Presley walked the floor in perturbed thought, but he finally stopped in front of the woman, and said:

"I have made up my mind to act in concert with you, for I believe every word you have said, though I have no proof beyond your own assertion. We must save this young girl, and restore her mind: that is the first thing to be considered. When she is in a condition to testify to her own identity, we can then communicate with her friends."

"That is a sensible decision, Doctor; and I have an idea that the Landry family would not like to have a noise made about the affair, wicked as it is. Hester Blake is this young lady's half-sister, and her father had her educated, and intended to give her enough to live on; but she wasn't satisfied with the provision he made for her, and when the chance came, she thought she'd take all that belonged to the other one. I have found out this by listening and spying around. I don't mind telling you; but my word an't all you've got to trust to. There's a letter in my pocket that Mrs. Blake gave me to put in the post-office, and if you choose to read it, you'll see for yourself that I've only spoke the truth to you."

Mrs. Muller drew forth the missive addressed to Mrs. Caroline Linley, and held it up, as she went on:

"I thought mebbe you'd scruple about breaking it open, so I held the envelope over the steam of the tea-kettle, and as I expected, found another one inside, with a strip of paper wrapped 'round it. On that was writ a line telling the Mr. Hinton to whose care it was to be sent, to put Miss Estelle Landry's name on it, and send it to Louisiana. I opened the inside one too, and read it, and I found out a good deal from it that I didn't know before. I think you ought to read it, Doctor, just to see what these people are capable of doing."

Presley's first impulse was to refuse, but he remembered that Mrs. Blake had placed herself beyond the pale of proprieties when she entered on her present course of action, and these lines written by her own hand might prove invaluable to him as Estelle Landry's defender, if Hester proved refractory. He took the letter, opened it, and glanced down the almost illegible pages penned by Mrs. Blake on the previous night.

After a pause, Presley said:

"I must retain this letter, Mrs. Muller; it may be of use as important evidence in the future, but something must be dispatched in its place."

"I've thought of that too, sir; and I snatched time to write a few lines to Hester, telling her that 'her ma was sick, and Dr. Macon had gone in the country to attend a patient that was so ill he couldn't leave him, and as Mrs. Blake was afeard she'd be uneasy at not hearing from us, she made me write.' I added what I thought would please her best: that 'our sick girl was pining away, and wouldn't trouble us much longer.' Now don't you think my head is good for something, sir, if I an't eddicated much?"

"You are a very shrewd woman, Mrs. Muller, and I should not care to make you my enemy. Give me what you have written, and I will put it in the envelope, while I retain the other. Of course you will be very careful to post the letter before you go back home?"

"Trust me for that, sir; but I must be going now. I have a great deal to do to-day, and I have been here a long time. I believe we understand each other now, Doctor, and you'll be sure to keep dark?"

"Yes; in this case, 'discretion will be the better part.' I shall be silent till it will be safe to speak, much as I should like to display Macon in his true colors to those who have placed him above myself since he came here and ousted me from my practice. But there is one thing I do not quite understand yet. Who and what was Mrs. Blake? She is an educated woman, and has the manners of a lady."

"*She!* Oh, she is nothing but a *creowl!*" said Mrs. Muller contemptuously.

"A what? I am afraid that I do not quite comprehend what you mean."

"I mean that she's a impedent pretender, what has done a worse thing before now than putting her own daughter in the place of her sister. I won't tell you all I've found out about Mrs. Blake, for it's of no use to do it, and I haven't time to talk any more now. When we've got Miss Landry safe out of her clutches, mebbe I'll tell you more. I haven't time to stay here talking over Mrs. Blake. I must get back and help her pack up, or she'll be suspecting something. Thursday night we'll be in New York, and you can follow us the next day. A house has been took for us, and as soon as I can find time, I will write and tell you where to find us. Good-morning, Doctor. Remember how much is at stake for you and me, and do your part well."

"I have chosen my path, Mrs. Muller, and I shall walk carefully upon it. With such people as those we have to deal with, we cannot be too wary."

The letter was duly posted, and the traitor in the house went back to her duties, and was so active and helpful, and so very respectful in her bearing, that Mrs. Blake almost forgave her for the impertinence of the previous night.

Dr. Presley sat thinking a long time over the revelation that had been made to him. But for his promise to Mrs. Muller, he would have denounced Macon at once, and had him arrested, though the shrewd representations of the woman had convinced him that such a course would not be safe in the present condition of affairs. Besides, he could not help admiring Hester's courage, and he had no desire to bring her to grief. Once he exclaimed aloud:

"By Jove! that girl has pluck enough to head an army! If I thought the other one would never recover, and that Hester would throw over Macon and take the other fellow, I would find it in my heart to let her hold on to what she has so cleverly seized. She is Landry's daughter after all, and has her rights as well as the other."

After this outburst, he fell into deeper thought than before, and the result of his reflections was, that he drew paper toward himself, and wrote to Herbert Spencer. The note was vague enough to have puzzled Spencer if it had reached him, but it never did. It was sent to Boston, for Presley was not aware of Herbert's removal, was delivered to a Mr. H. Spencer, who knew nothing of the Landry family, and thought the writer slightly deranged.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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—There is nothing which contributes more to the sweetness of life than friendship; there is nothing which disturbs our repose more than friends, if we have not the discernment to choose them well.

ONE OF THE HANDS.

BY ETHEL LYNN.

"One of the hands" went through the archway,
  Black with the grimy touch of trade,
One of the "hands" of Barr & Barter,
  Out of the sun into the shade:
Strength in the nervous active fingers,
  Strength in the living thews of steel,
To pluck their worth from Life and Labor,
  Through master-touch o'er steam and wheel.

Only "a hand" to Barr & Barter,
  Value affixed in pounds and pence;
One figure in the count financial,
  One item in the week's expense.
A bird sang loud, up in the linden,
  The fact'ry hand looked up and smiled;
Again in merry distant England
  He walked, a careless, happy child;

Then hurried on into the shadow,
  Out of Earth's sunshine evermore
Straight to a death of sudden horror
  That crouched within a waiting door
A crash! a cry! The harnessed demon
  Leaped from its bound, and burst its bands;
Smote, like a human slave revengeful,
  Out of its path—one of the hands!

None moaned above the shabby coffin,
  And Barr & Barter said, "'Twas sad—
Quite dreadful! It was English Jimmy,
  The best mill hand they ever had."
Across the sea, an English lassie
  Treasures a sunny lock of hair,
A slender ring and little Bible,
  With kiss and tear and rev'rent care.

Though the mill hand can never claim her,
  And even graves are fixed apart,
A mem'ry keeps her own for ever,
  The love that filled an English heart.
And through the tears that softly glimmer,
  She reads how One in yonder land,
On earth wrought daily honest labor,
  And won't forget a working "hand."

TOM'S STORY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS

"Did you ever hear of my oriental adventure?" said Tom, perching himself upon the counting-house desk.

"*Your* oriental adventure?" asked Ned, amazed.

"Well, it's worth hearing," said Tom, "if it *did* happen to me. It was when I was in Damascus, a mere attaché of a grave diplomatic party, a boy of twenty, who might as well have been left at home, I suppose."

"I should say so," said Ned. "When *you* belonged to a diplomatic party, and were in Damascus. *You*—well?"

"I was in a bazaar," said Tom. "Englishmen always haunt bazaars when they are in Damascus."

"Oh," said Tom, "do they?"

"I had bought cigar cases and smoking caps and tobacco bags, and all sorts of things," said Tom. "I had slippers and scarfs and a shawl for my mother, and a garment of red silk and gold thread of which I did not know the name. And I was buying a pipe of oriental style, with a long stem, and a water bottle for the smoke to pass through, when a great puffy bag of black silk which enveloped a lady paused near me, and squatted down before the shop of a young jewel merchant, for the purpose of examining his bracelets.

"Only the eyes of this figure were visible, but they were blacker and more beautiful than those of any heroine of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments, and they lit on me once, twice, three times, and sent a sensation through my heart to which it was happily as yet a stranger.

"Behind the figure stood the less carefully vailed person of an old female servant. Some gray hair struggled over a wrinkled forehead, and the vail even revealed the upper part of her high nose. She was the guardian of the young beauty probably. That it was a young beauty thus hid under the silken balloon I had no doubt. It was like an oriental tale.

"The jewel merchant was busy with his wares. The merchant of hubble-bubbles with his and my money. No one but the old woman saw the beauty make me a little sign with her exquisite hand; but she did it. The sign seemed to say, 'Wait.' I waited.

"What I waited for I hardly knew. I understood the customs of the country well enough to be aware that I could not speak to this damsel, or be addressed by her, in the open streets; but I understood young women well enough to know that something was in store for me in the way of an adventure. My *repertoire* of gesture is not large. No Englishman's is. I nodded a 'Yes.' It sufficed. As she went away, guarded by her old attendant, she repeated the motion.

"'Wait,' it said again.

"'Yes,' replied my nod.

"There was a coffee-house close at hand, open to the street like all the other shops. There, with my hubble-bubbles in my hand, I squatted on a cushion, and sipped and smoked. I also eat something. It may have been the conserve of pomegranates without pepper, of which we read in the Arabian Nights. It was sweet; it melted on the palate. It left behind a delicious taste and fragrance. It was oriental to the last degree.

"Near me, one smoked something stronger that tobacco—hasheesh, perhaps—that sent him, by and by, into a strange sort of sleep, his eyes half open, his hands dropped on their backs, half shut, against the cushions, the pipe still between his lips.

"Within the coffee shop, a story-teller threw down a little flat basket for contributions, and began his narrative with, 'In the name of Allah!'

"It was about the genii; but I had little comprehension of the tale, my knowledge of the language being so poor.

"In its midst I saw a figure pass—pause—make a sign to me.

"It was the old woman, the servant of my mysterious beauty. I flung a coin to the story-teller, and followed her.

"She went on for a long while, until I began to think that she would never speak to me; but at last she paused under the shadow of the blank white-plaster walls of a house in a quiet part of the city, and suddenly letting down a long wisp of gray hair, took from it a letter—a little crooked thing written on bright paper, and drenched with perfume.

"I tore it open. It was written in queer English.

"'I a little English know,' it began. 'My mother she English. Most beautiful! I wait for you. Come.'"

"When she said 'most beautiful,' did she mean *you?*" asked Dick, in amaze.

"Yes," said Tom, "of course."

"What do the gentlemen look like there?" asked Dick.

"'Where shall I go?' I asked of the old woman.

"She beckoned. Again I followed. We walked on, she going before, I following, until she paused before a white-plastered wall, in which was a narrow door. Unlocking this, she motioned me to enter, and almost treading on my heels in her haste, instantly slipped in after me and relocked it.

"I found myself in the most beautiful garden imagination can depict. A fountain played in the centre, and flowers of the most gorgeous colors bloomed in the splendid vases and urns that surrounded it. Beyond it was a rose arbor. Obeying the old woman's motions, I entered the door of this fragrant retreat.

"On the instant, two beautiful arms were cast about my neck, and a voice like that of the nightingale softly breathed these words:

"'Oh, how long I have waited for you, joy of my soul!'

"It was the girl whom I had seen at the bazaar. I knew her eyes and her hands at once, and I knew also that I had met my fate. I loved her on the instant as well as she seemed to love me."

"Bother," said Dick.

"I can't make *you* understand that delicious emotion," said Tom, sighing. "There we sat together, talking like lovers who had been parted for years. She slipped a ring upon my finger. I gave her one from mine. I vowed to bear her away to the land where lovers were not the slaves they were there, and she promised to meet me at the little garden gate at midnight, when, in disguise, I would convey her to a place of safety, procure the protection of our consul, with whom I was intimately acquainted, and marry her that very night."

"Going it fast," said Dick.

Tom sighed.

"Suddenly, as we sat there," said he, "the old woman rushed into the arbor. She whispered a word to my beautiful lady-love, who wrung her hands in terror.

"'Fly for your life!' she said.

"'If Allah spares my life, I will meet you at the gate at midnight. If not, adieu until we meet in Paradise.'

"Then the old woman seized me by the arm, hurried me to the gate, pushed me out, and locked it behind me.

"The garden vanished. I saw my love no more. I sat bewildered upon a rough stone bench. It had been like a story of the Arabian Nights thus far. How would it end? I knew not.

"Don't ask me what I did with myself during the remaining hours of the day. I know nothing of them.

"At midnight I sat upon the stone bench again, clad in a coarse oriental dress, but with a pistol hidden beneath it. I had resolved rather to die than to allow her to be torn from me. It was love at first sight that I felt, but years could not have made it stronger.

"I waited. The moon arose round and yellow in the sky. The feathery heads of the date palms seemed to nod to me. A strange bird uttered a shrill cry. A dog barked. I heard steps within the garden, and shrank back into the shadow. They were not the steps of women. As I listened the gate opened, and four black slaves, bearing a burden, emerged therefrom. As the moonlight fell upon them, I saw that they held the sides of a great sack.

"They marched away toward the river. As I watched them, dreading I knew not what, the old woman, with her hair dishevelled, rushed out of the garden, and wringing her hands, pointed after them.

"'What has happened?' I shrieked.

"She threw into my hand a little note, the counterpart of the one I had received that day.

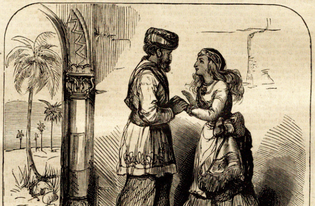
"I tore it open and read these words:

"'Adieu! the Caliph has discovered all. I was his wife. The fate of an unfaithful wife in this land is to be sewed up in a bag of lime, and cast into the river. Adieu, forever. NAIDA.'

"With a wild shriek I rushed after the retreating slaves, and—awoke."

"Eh?" said Ned; "awoke?"

"Yes," said Tom. "That was when I was down with that bad fever three years ago, and Sam. had been showing me a Turkish pipe, and my black-haired cousin Belle had read me to sleep with the 'Howadji in Syria;' and out of these three things, an oriental pipe, a pretty brunette and an exquisite book, my adventure in Damascus with the beautiful maiden was born."



TOO MUCH FOR MIDGET.

Timkins, Tarbox, and Midget were a convivial trio. They were married men, and yet they spent many of their evenings at the tavern, thus leaving undone duties which ought to have been done, and doing a great many things which ought never to have been done. One night the trio sat at the festive board of Pimple's tavern until very near to midnight, at which hour they were about as drunk as men could be and not be dead. A dispute arose touching the payment of the bill for the evening's entertainment.

"Hole on," said Timkins. "Let 'r be till t'-morrer. When we get home our wives 'll be sure to tell us to do some onaccountable thing, and if ary one of us refuses to do the first thing his wife tells him to do after he gets into the house, he shall pay the whole bill for the party."

This was agreed to, and it was further stipulated that each should give a true account of the result at their next meeting. On the following evening the friends met again. Timkins led off.

"Well, boys," said he, "I had a tough one, but I did it. It was dark as pitch in the house when I got home, and as I was lumbering through the kitchen, I stumbled against the stove, and knocked the tea-kettle off onto the floor. That started my wife, and she sang out to me,—'*Say, you brute, tip over the cooking-stove, and done with it!*' No sooner said than done. I gave the old thing a h'ist, and over it went.—My eyes!—didn't my wife come out of bed! But I did it."

Tarbox next gave his experience:

"Good for you, Tim.; but I'm even with you, though my job wasn't quite so tough. When I got home I had to get into the house through the buttery window, as usual, and I've no doubt that I made considerable of a clatter among the tin pans. If my wife had been asleep she woke up. 'That's right!' she called out, at the top of her voice. 'Tip things over, won't you! *Don't miss the cream pot. Upset that too!*' I knew the pot must be nearly full of cream, but I'd got the order, and was bound to obey, and over went the next churnin' on to the floor. What befell me very shortly afterward, and what particular language Mrs. Tarbox used on the occasion, I won't say,—but I'd obeyed orders."

Midget came next, and he approached the subject of his narrative with downcast looks. "Well, boys," he said, "I s'pose I've got to foot the bill. Unfortunately my wife asked too much of me. When I got home I found the back door left unlocked, so I got into the house without making much noise; but in going up stairs, I stumbled, and the racket of my fall was quickly echoed by Mrs. Midget's voice, pitched in a most snappish and peremptory key. 'There, Midget,' she cried, 'tumble again! *Tumble and break your worthless neck!*' Says I, 'That's too much for Midget! I'd rather pay the bill at the tavern.' And so, boys, I'll settle up." C.

—Fortune is the rod of the weak and the staff of the brave.

O'CONNELL'S WIFE.

Lately we found in the scrap-book of an aged wife and mother—pasted among her choicest clippings—the following reply made by O'Connell when, at a dinner given him at Newcastle, his wife was toasted. She who had thus treasured this sentiment had been the wife of a great and good man; and I thought, as I read it, how blessed is the State whose leading men have true and loving wives.

What grander sphere can woman claim than this! What nobler tribute to woman's worth than a tribute like this from the champion of his oppressed people! Said O'Connell, in answer to the toast:

"There are some topics of so sacred and sweet a nature that they may be comprehended by those who are happy, but cannot possibly be described in spoken language. The most I dare attempt is to thank you in the name of her who was the disinterested choice of my early youth; who was the ever cheerful companion of my manly years; and who is the sweetest solace of the 'sear and yellow leaf' that has fallen upon me with advancing age. In her name I thank you; and that my thanks are deep and heart-felt I think you will readily believe; for experience, I am sure, will show to us all that man cannot find the strong and unflinching heart to battle and struggle against the malignant and powerful enemies of his country unless his nest at home is warm and comfortable—unless in the sacred retreat of that home his brow may be smoothed by a loved and loving hand." C.

SCIENCE.

A correspondent writes us from New Orleans as follows: "On Wednesday night, the 8th of March, 1871, a large quantity of sulphur fell during the rain of that night, and the next morning could be plainly seen covering the gutters and in the streets of this city. Some people here pretend to say that such showers of sulphur forebode sickness. I believe that sulphur falls every year about the opening of spring, but cannot tell the cause of its appearance, having never seen it stated in books or newspapers. My father, who is about seventy years old, says the substance is not sulphur at all, but something that falls from the trees when they are beginning to bloom; and to verify this assertion, he says that if a quantity of the so-called sulphur be collected and a match applied to it, it will fail to burn. Will you please give your opinion upon this matter?" The supposition that the substance is of vegetable origin is probably correct.

The latest dispatches received by the Navy Department from the United States expedition to the North Pole, under Captain Hall, bear date the 24th of August, 1871, and occupied about a year in transmission. All on board the *Polaris*—thirty-three persons—were well and in good spirits. She was some distance above the Danish settlement of Upernavik, slowly steaming northward. According to the Governor of North Greenland, the season was unusually favorable for the voyage which the expedition hoped to accomplish.

The action of the sea in forming sand-bars at the river mouths along the coast of Natal, South Africa, effectually dams up many of the smaller rivers of that colony during the dry season, usually pushing back the waters inland so as to form a wide lagoon, which overflows the barrier at one of its extremities after the rainy season sets in. An attempt is now being made in the Neilgherry Hills, Southern India, to utilize a like action on the part of the mountain streams, and thereby raise dams for artificial lakes in which to store water for irrigation.

Some occurrences at the Dubuque meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science reflect but little credit upon the official management of that body. It appears that two papers of a character wholly inappropriate for the consideration of the Association were permitted to be read at a single session: one was an argument in favor of wine as a national and social good, and the other is described as "a political appeal to the national government to repair the levees of the Mississippi delta."

A pictured cave has been discovered in Namaqua-Land, South Africa. It is about twelve days' march from Lake Ngami, and its walls are decorated with rude sketches of various animals, among which the unicorn is conspicuous. The drawings are believed to be the work of Bushmen, as traditions of the former existence of the unicorn are common among them.

The New York Legislature of 1870-71 offered a prize of one hundred thousand dollars for some motive power to take the place of horses on canals. It is doubtful whether any of the models or schemes thus far submitted to the commissioners will be accepted, as the problem to be solved in devising a suitable mechanism for the purpose is one of great difficulty.

Mr. C. W. Siemens, president of the new English Society of Telegraph Engineers, expresses the opinion that the requirements of the present day are tending toward the construction of long underground telegraph lines, like those which were established on the Continent at an early date, and which had to give way to the common suspended line wire now in general use.

The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada loses a very large number of iron rails every winter through fracture, attributed to the severity of the cold to which the line is exposed. A portion of the road has been laid with steel, and on this the proportionate loss due to the same cause is much smaller than on the iron track.

During the siege of Paris, M. F. Lucas made some experiments to ascertain how far the waters of the Seine would convey sounds made for telegraphic purposes, and found that the tones of a heavy bell were transmitted to a distance of only fifteen hundred to eighteen hundred metres.

A marked relation between the direction of the wind and the number of sun-spots is indicated by records kept at the University of Oxford, in England, during the last eight years. Westerly winds are most prevalent at the period of maximum frequency of the sun-spots.

The Abbé David, in a letter from China to M. Milne-Edwards, mentions the occurrence, in the province of Tche-Kiang, of a fresh-water tortoise which attains a weight of from two hundred to three hundred pounds.

It is proposed to tunnel the Straits of Gibraltar in order to shorten the land route from Western Europe to India. A project for the purpose is said to have been submitted to the government of Spain.

In order to determine the amount of iron contained in the blood of an invertebrate animal—that is, an animal without any backbone—M. Boussingault selected the common garden slug as the subject of his experiments. He has just reported to the Paris Academy of Sciences that its blood contains only one sixty-nine thousandth per cent. of iron.

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

KANSAS writes: "Some five years ago I became engaged to be married to a young lady with whom I had been keeping company over a year previous to our engagement, and shortly afterwards I left and came West, with the understanding that I was to return the next fall—one year from that time—when we were to be married. But early in the following spring, after I had been absent about four months, she asked me to return and marry her then, or not at all. I answered that I did not feel justified in marrying at that time, as I was really not in circumstances to take care of a wife properly, but that I was doing well, and my prospects were very flattering for establishing myself in a good business, and that by fall I should be able to provide a good and comfortable home for her. I was then foreman in a large manufacturing establishment, and my employers would not consent to my being absent for so long a time as would be necessary; it would be a great inconvenience to them, and cause me to lose my situation; and as she was pleasantly situated, and had a good home, I thought her demands somewhat unjust, under the circumstances. I told her that if she wished to be released from the engagement, she could be; or I would return in the fall and marry her, as was agreed upon. She gave no reasons, particularly, for wanting to be married so soon, and I had never kept company with another, nor even accompanied any other young lady on any occasion after our engagement. As I refused to marry at that time she asked to be released, which I granted; but she refused to return the ring I gave her, and other things, saying that she intended to keep them as long as she lived. I afterwards married a lady here, but I never loved her as one ought to love another to marry her. I told her so before we were married; but she would not believe but what I would in time. The marriage proved an unhappy one, and after living together three years in misery, we mutually agreed to separate, and at my request she applied to the District Court for a divorce, on the ground of desertion, and as I made no defence, the court granted her petition. In the mean time the lady to whom I was first engaged married, and lived with her husband three weeks, and left him, simply because she said she did not love him. He afterwards procured a divorce for her and himself, and committed suicide by poison, in Chicago. Shortly after my separation with my wife I received a letter from her, asking me to call and see her. She says that I am the only man she ever loved, and that she has been unhappy from the day she asked to be released from her engagement with me. Now, if I thought that I could be happy with her, and could make her so, I would very readily consent to marry her, as she is the only woman that I ever truly loved, and I know that I could never feel toward any other woman as I always have felt, and do yet feel toward her. Yet the question arises in my mind, should I be happy with her, and would I not be taking a great chance of being served as her former husband was? In your opinion, would it do to trust her again? as it would be much better to keep away from each other than to have a reunion result in more unhappiness to both of us." We cannot advise you as to the *policy* of marrying the widow, because your divorce from your wife was granted on grounds which we do not recognize as morally sufficient. For our views of the whole matter of divorce, we refer you to the doctrine of the New Testament on that subject.

L. (Ohio) writes: "I am an engineer on the railroad in this State, and am twenty-five years of age. I was born in the city of New York, but have no recollection of either father or mother, being, in fact, a child of the streets. I sold papers and blacked boots until I was fourteen years of age, when I engaged myself to a canal-boat captain, as a driver, and came to Buffalo, from which place I came out West, and after a great many trials and hardships, I have arrived at my present position. Through the aid of a friend, I have learned to read very well, and also to write a little, as you see. About two years ago, I fell in love with a very good and handsome girl of this place. After going with her for about six months, I found, on inquiry, that my love was returned, and we were engaged to be married. All went well until one evening we had some words about a trifle, and parted in anger. The next morning she sent me my ring, and all the little presents I had given her, saying that she did not wish to see or hear from me again. I felt very bad, but determined to act as if I did not care, and shortly after began keeping company with another young lady of my acquaintance. I have been going to see her regularly for a year, but no engagement exists between us. Now the other evening I met, for the first time since we parted, at the house of a mutual friend, my first and only love. She having no escort, I asked leave to see her home. I found out on the way home that she had never ceased to love me, and although a very good and respectable young man has been coming to see her, she cannot, on that account, bear him; and as my love for her is as strong as ever, we made up our long quarrel before parting that night. Now, knowing no other person to come to for advice, I ask of the dear old *Ledger*—that good old paper which I may say taught me to read—what to do in the bad fix I am in; for the other young lady and all her friends think it a sure thing that I am going to marry her? Please advise me through your valuable paper what honorable way to get out of the bad scrape I am in." You had better call on the second lady, and tell her the exact truth of the whole matter. It is unfortunate for her, but not so bad as it would be for her to marry a man who loves another, and does not love her. Of course she will see this statement and the answer, and may profit thereby.

H. A. J. (Kentucky) says: "I come to you, as many others do, for some advice, hoping for an answer through your columns at your earliest convenience. Five years ago I met a widower, and for two months we were much in each other's society, and I became very much attached to him. He left here, went South; was gone two years. I waited and hoped for some tidings, but all in vain. He had married again, and his second wife lived but a short while. He called a year ago to see me, and we have again been in each other's society a great deal, until the last three months. And there is something that has caused him to treat me very coldly, and I cannot tell what it is. He never calls, and I would give the world, if I possessed it, to win him back. I have tried to love others, but cannot; and have tried so hard to give him up, and to banish him from my mind, but I am constantly thinking of him, and often ask myself why I love him, for he certainly cannot care for me, when he treats me so coldly when we meet. Yet he tells a friend that he does love me, and would love to be with me; and yet he never comes. And when we meet, it is always with only a cold bow. I do not hear of him paying any attention to any other lady. My mother wishes me never to speak to him again till he explains himself. The two last times we met I paid no attention to him whatever, for I am not conscious of doing anything to offend him. And I would rather die than to hear of him marrying another. Will I be doing right in letting him make the first advance to a reconciliation and an explanation? I love him devotedly, and I know he did me seven months ago. Please tell me what you think of this, and oblige." We think your mother a sensible person, and as she knows you and the circumstances, we advise you to be guided by her advice.

MINNIE LAWTON (Columbus, Ohio) says: "I have a young gentleman friend whom I have alienated by an act of mine—though unintentionally—and will you tell me if I am in the wrong. For some time he has accompanied me to evening services at church, and always acceptably, for I esteem him highly as a friend. Last Sunday he passed me as I was returning home from morning services, and bowing, he merely remarked, 'Remember this evening,' and then passed on. In the evening another gentleman friend happened in to see me, and at the time of evening services invited me to go with him, and as I was somewhat in doubt as to the intention of my regular attendant, I accepted the latter gentleman's offer. After leaving, the former came to my home, and finding I had already gone, penned a note, which he sent to me after my return home, in which he informs me that he is indignant at what he terms my treachery, and begs to be considered as no longer my friend. Now what shall I do under the circumstances? Shall I try to have an explanation, and inform him of my misunderstanding, or shall I leave the matter entirely alone? Though valuing his friendship and esteem very highly, I do not feel that I can compromise myself in any way to regain them. A word in answer to this appeal will be gratefully received." A simple statement of the facts at the time would have been proper and dignified; but some time having now elapsed, it is probably as well to let the gentleman seek the explanation, which he ought to have asked before writing. If he is to be of any use to you, he *will* seek it ultimately.

SOUTH CAROLINA says: "For many years I have been a constant reader of your excellent paper, and knowing your kindness in answering correspondents, I take the liberty of addressing you upon a subject of great importance to me. I am twenty years of age, and have not made up my mind yet what kind of business I will pursue. I have been all my life upon a farm with my father, but the times are so hard now that it is my duty to seek employment. Mother is all the time telling me to go at something. Pa is all the time telling me he will get some situation for me, but he makes no move. Sometimes I make up my mind to go to sea on some vessel, and sometimes I think I would like to be on some coast steamer as mate, but situations are not easily got. I am willing to work, and able to do any kind of honest work. Dear *Ledger*, please give me some of your good advice through your Notices to Correspondents. What do you think is the most profitable business for me to pursue, as a young man just starting? I will watch the notices eagerly." At your age you would be at a disadvantage in many forms of business. You will probably do best in farming. If farming is not paying in your neighborhood, strike out into a new region, say Texas, Kansas, or California. Engage for a year as a "hand," till you learn the local ways, and then get land for yourself, which it is easy to do in new States. This is better than seafaring for you; and as for being "mate," when you are settled on your own place, become the mate of some good farmer's daughter, and live a happy, independent life, ploughing the soil, not the main.

REBECCA says: "I am sixteen years of age. There has been a young gentleman visiting me for a year. He is desperately in love with me, and says he would do anything in his power to make me happy. He is a very nice gentleman, and has no bad habits that I am aware of. But my parents object to his visiting me. I think it is because he is poor. They say they would never be willing for me to marry him. I *like* him very well, but do not *love* him. Please inform me what to do about it—tell him to discontinue his visits or not?" If you are quite sure that you do not love him, tell him that on account of the objection of your parents, you would prefer he should not visit you; but we rather think that when you come to put it to the test there will be a pit-a-pat about your heart which you do not anticipate.

DAISY (Falmouth) writes: "Suppose a young lady, absent from friends, opens a correspondence with an unknown gentleman. A meeting is agreed upon, at which she has reason to expect a proposal. How would you advise her to act?" We should advise her to go directly home, and tell her mamma that she has done a foolish and naughty thing, and deserves to have her ears pulled.

H. R. G. says: "As I cannot advise with any lawyer here in regard to the following, will you be kind enough to give me your opinion at your earliest convenience? I have been for the past two years engaged in a mercantile business in one of our extreme Western States. I failed a short time since, and did not make any settlement with my creditors; was owing about fifteen thousand dollars. Some of my creditors attached, and had their claims satisfied; while others, who did not attach, have since got judgments, which they hold against me. At the time of my failure I had, in good notes, three thousand dollars, which I indorsed to a friend—a lawyer—in order to save them from attachment; I not considering it morally wrong, as I did not start out with the intention of defrauding any one. He, to make the thing appear legitimate in case of an investigation, charged me on his books with the amount of the aforesaid notes, 'To cash, $3,000,' and took said notes as collateral for cash borrowed of him. He very suddenly lost his life a few weeks ago, and the second day after his death an Administrator was appointed. He has collected some of the notes I speak of, and placed them to the credit of the deceased, and has also brought suit against me, and will get judgment for the three thousand dollars charged on deceased's books, which I in reality never owed. Do you think I will ever be able to recover any of the money? and if so, how shall I proceed? And what shall I do about the judgment? Any information given me through the *Ledger* will be thankfully received." You pay the penalty to which every man is liable who goes out of the straight path. You can hardly plead your own fraud, in any action you may attempt, and will be required, in any defence you make, to explain how your notes came to be in the hands of deceased. We are of opinion that three thousand dollars' worth of wisdom is all you can get out of this affair. We do not admit that a wrong course is justifiable because you did not begin business with the intent to defraud. An honest business is "begun, continued and ended" in honesty. We have further to add, that this is a lay opinion we give, and that we do not propose to encroach on the functions of men who give legal opinions, and are entitled to receive their fee.

B. M. writes: "I have received an excellent education, and am considered by my friends as possessed of talents of no common order, in consequence of which it is natural for them to expect corresponding results. Now, while I am exceedingly desirous that these expectations might be realized, yet I very much fear they never will be, owing to my lack of that great requisite of success in life, self-confidence. To give you an illustration, whereby you may be able to comprehend the true nature and extent of my complaint: I have been out of employment for some time past, and in my futile attempts to secure something to do, my usual style of procedure is this: I start from home, fully determined in my own mind that I will make application at a certain place of business; and, fully satisfied of my ability to perform my simple errand, I pursue my way with confident step, and with bright hopes for the future, until, alas! approaching near my destination, I become painfully aware that my confidence in myself is steadily decreasing and, when at last I find myself before the building, my courage fails me entirely, and I am compelled to pass by without entering, very much despising myself for my failing to perform so simple an act. Now my desire is to be informed of some remedy whereby this weakness in my constitution may be overcome, and I be enabled to assume a manly role in the great drama of life. What do you think of my handwriting, for one who is just on the eve of attaining his majority? Does it equal Horace Greely's?" When a young man, not yet twenty-one, starts out with the assurance that he is "possessed of talents of no common order," we feel confident that, whatever maladies he may be subject to, there is not the slightest danger of his ever dying of modesty. The reluctance to apply for a situation is very natural, and is probably attributable to the feeling that there may be a refusal, and that that would be humiliating. Ask some older, confidential friend to speak to the parties whom you have in view on the subject. As to your handwriting, it is better than Horace Greeley's; but your spelling is not so good: for instance, you spell the last syllable of Mr. Greeley's name "*ly*," instead of "*ley*."

DISCOURAGED (Springfield) says: "I am an only son of very indulgent parents, who are very well off in this world's goods. I have several sisters, who are married and have left the parental roof. I have been keeping company with young ladies for ten or twelve years, in fact ever since I was fifteen years old, and have yet to find one that I think I could make my wife. I have kept company with the best girls in the country. I was never satisfied unless I had company, and consequently, to do justice to the ladies, I had to change often, and I came to be called a male flirt. Some say I think there is no one good enough for me. Now I do not think so. I have known girls who are better than I am. The wonder is that they will go with me at all; but still they do—all that I choose to ask. Now, as I am twenty-eight years old, and am quite lonesome at home, I think it is time I should get married. Please let me know what you think of my case. Am I not capable of loving, or has the right one not come along yet? What do you advise me to do? I am about discouraged. I am keeping company now, and have been for some time, with a splendid young lady, whom I have thought very strongly of proposing to; but it does not seem as though I love her as I ought, and if I quit her, it won't be doing her injustice. Tell me what I had better do." You seem to be a person of a vacillating nature, and this inherent weakness you have indulged and cultivated *by wandering about among young ladies, frittering away* your time and theirs, not knowing what you wanted, or whom you liked, or whether you liked anybody or not; but vainly imagining every one to be in love with you. We advise you to absent yourself from ladies' society for a year; pursue a rigid, hard course of study; read Foster on Decision of Character, and strive to make a man of yourself.

ERNESTINE writes: "I am in deep trouble, and come to you for advice. I am in my sixteenth year, and I am engaged to a young gentleman of twenty. He loves me dearly, and often says life will be a blank if I do not become his. His affection is returned, and I love him better than life; but he is poor, and I am rich. Now our trouble is this: My father is very proud, and many people say, a cruel-hearted man; and were he to think that I am engaged to a poor artist, I believe he would almost kill me. He has a friend, a rich man, over sixty years old, who is also a suitor of mine, whom he encouraged in his suit. A few days ago, I rejected this old man, and he told father, who was very angry, and declared that I should marry his friend. And the wedding-day is not far off. Now my intended husband does not wish to marry yet; he says we are both too young. I think he is right; and he told me to write to you for advice. I would rather die than marry one whom I do not love." Honor your father; but when he undertakes to compel you to marry against your wishes, he attempts something beyond the bounds of parental authority. Your young suitor should strive to merit your father's esteem and approbation, and if he does so, and you are both patient, we trust all will yet end well.

QUANDARY writes: "A gentleman who is fourteen years my junior wishes me to marry him. He is rich, but his principles are not exactly to my mind. He has been twice dismissed from college, has broken a marriage engagement with one lady, and has been, I am sorry to say, a fast young man. But he professes to love me devotedly, and says if I will only marry him that he will become all that I wish him to be. Is it safe for me to trust him when he has already deceived one, or shall I undertake his reformation?" The disparity in age is very great, especially when it is against the woman, and is a grave objection to the marriage. You will have to judge for yourself whether it is a conclusive one or not. We apprehend that the attempt at the "reformation" of the young man would be more interesting than successful. As you would occupy a sort of mixed relation, of wife and mother, toward him, you might, possibly, be able to accomplish something bordering on the miraculous.

C. L. J. writes: "I am in trouble. I became greatly attached to a young lady, and attended church every Sunday with her. While at her house one evening last winter, she had company, and paid a great deal of attention to a young gentleman during the evening, which I noticed, and I did not call on her for a month afterward. She wrote me two letters, which I never answered, but I called and explained things to her. She said she had no intention of doing wrong; but she must give him some encouragement, as he calls on her very often. Now, Mr. Editor, is she not in the wrong? I am greatly grieved at her conduct, as I have become too much attached to her to give her up so soon. What would be your advice for me to do? She does not treat me as she did before she met him. Her mother thinks a great deal of me, but not so much of him." Tell her to make her choice, and be done with it; and that if she wants two strings to her bow—or two beaux to her string—you do not wish to be one of them.

R. (Brownsville) writes: "I have just settled in business here in Kentucky, and think I could do better married. I am in love with a fair girl of sweet sixteen. She has assured me of her love, and promised to marry me at any time and place; but her parents are unwilling for a speedy marriage to take place between us, because she is so young. Would it be right for me to take her from the State and marry her, or had I better wait her father's and mother's time? I will be guided entirely by your advice in this case, as I know you are capable of advising young people." You had better be married when you obtain the consent and approval of the young lady's parents; but not before.

M. AND M.—two young ladies—say: "We have a gentleman friend living several miles from here, who has been very, very sick. He is slowly recovering now. Would it be improper for us to drive out to see him? We should like to very much." You had better wait a little longer, until he gets well enough to drive over to see you. Angels' visits are said to be few and far between. Under some circumstances it is more prudent that they should not be made at all.

M. B. says: "I am nineteen years of age, and have, up to a few weeks ago, been keeping company with a young lady of sixteen; but one day we had a little fuss and she gave me up, and now she goes with another young man. Now I wish you to advise me the best way to get her back, because I love her dearly." See her, and have a frank explanation with her, and if that does not suffice, devote yourself to some one else.

DAVID (Grand Valley) writes: "Is it proper, under any circumstances, for a married man to procure a livery carriage and take another man's wife only, to a festival after night? And has the lady's husband any grounds of complaint?" The man who invites the married lady commits a wrong; she is guilty of a great impropriety if she accepts; and the husband is less than a man if he tolerates such a proceeding.

B. J. (Cincinnati) asks: "If I accompany a young lady to a party, and at the close of the party there are more young ladies than young men, is it right for me to ask another lady if I may accompany her home—of course taking my lady also?" It is quite right if it is agreeable all round. Why not?

MILITARY writes: "Several of my friends and myself have been arguing about the correct pronunciation of the word 'Lieutenant,' and have decided to leave the matter with you." *Lu-ten-ant* and *lev-ten-ant* are both correct pronunciations.

⁂ *Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.*